FOLLOWING the FRONTIER

ROGER POCOCK

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BY

ROGER POCOCK

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FOLLOWING THE FRONTIER

I

PUPPYHOOD

THE snow was falling heavily on the ship's deck, but the place where I sat down had become quite damp, while in the muzzle of a popgun I molded white lighthouse towers to mount on snowball cliffs around my coast. Presently my brother flounced by along the poop, very important, his hand dripping gore from a fine new wound. He was too proud to speak, and I sobbed with jealous rage. That is my first memory.

Our home was an old battleship used for the training of "boys unconvicted of crime," but under suspicion; in my case to be painfully confirmed. As I grew, too good to be quite wholesome, it was with a general air of having stepped into the wrong century by mistake. When I was old enough, and went to school in the Midlands, the big boys, with a healthy instinct of something wrong, did their best to put me out of my misery; and I survived, but with broken nerve, a coward.

Yet that was not so disastrous as the grammar-school tuition, which still prepares the modern boy to be a scrivener for the sixteenth century. We asked for bread, and they gave us a stone—the bones of dead languages to gnaw instead of the living speech of living nations; the useless abstractions of Euclid and the syntax instead of commercial mathematics; the squalid biographies of English kings instead of the history of our freedom; the names of counties to us who were citizens of an Empire; dogmatic theology to cut us off from Christ; and no training whatever of the hands in craftsmanship, or of the eye in aiming rifles to defend our homes.

Having missed an education, I came forth blinking into the modern world with an apologetic manner appealing for kindness, and large useless hands, as fit for earning wages as a nine-days' puppy.

When asked to choose a trade I had no impulse, for all that my forefathers had won with the sword was barred to the penniless son of a half-pay captain. My father found me a most suitable opening as a clerk, but when I was turned out of the Submarine Telegraph Service, useless, ashamed of being a further expense, it was to tramp the streets of London in

despair. Because I was too young to enlist, being only fifteen, my mother found me in the streets and led me home, saying no words then or afterwards. As for me, I put on an air of high estrangement, walking in that mysterious gloom which affords much comfort to the young puppy, but is apt to depress its family.

When my father felt depressed about his income, we always moved, generally to another continent, by way of economy. To this, his one dissipation, my mother deferred with patience, and had shifted her home by turns to Jersey, Bombay, Southsea, New Zealand, Ludlow, Shields, and Norwood, without allowing him to feel disturbed in his comfort. On this occasion the financial depression landed him in Canada, and we followed—sailing from Liverpool. As we entered the Gulf of St. Lawrence, a piece of ice nipped off the ship's propeller, whereupon the third mate explained to me that we were suffering from rats in the cylinder.

This, with nearly a thousand people on board, was very awkward, especially when the helpless ship was picked up by a wandering ice-field, which was jammed by a gale against the cliffs of Cape Breton. The frail iron walls of the liner bent inward, crushed by

incalculable pressure, and we came near the end of all earthly troubles before a change of wind, and a search expedition, delivered us timely from the jaws of death. After our settlement in a cottage beside the St. Lawrence, my father put me out to grass upon a farm, and the farmer bore with me to the limits of human endurance before he wrote a letter of protest, saying that he found himself ruled by an elderly gentleman with a mania for imparting information, and a distaste for cleaning the stables.

The next expedient was to send me to an agricultural college, where youths are instructed in the simple elements of inorganic chemistry and the complexities of sorting out frozen potatoes. The corrupt institution received quarterly bribes for allowing me to lurk on the premises.

From this safe anchorage I was wrenched away to a clerkship in Life Assurance. I worked hard at boating, bathing, and musical evenings, until the management sent word to my father that my valuable time was being thrown away in their office, and that my true vocation would be found out of doors, in the nearest chain-gang. On this my father referred me to various burning texts in the Holy Scripture, and

would have cut me off with a shilling but for the painful fact that he was short of change.

In the next stages of the Road to Ruin, I traveled by train across Ontario, and by steamer through Lake Huron and Lake Superior, until at the end of a further voyage in a steam-launch I came to my first camp on the great Frontier.

The campfire was a stack of dead trees, whose red-hot logs sent up a column of flame. A circle of tired men basked in the heat of it, behind them glimmered a few lighted tents, and walls of black forest towered gaunt above.

These walls reached away in darkness, but between them, under the moonlight, there lay a confusion of jagged roots, charred logs and stumps of trees, with here the semblance of a ghastly face, there limbs which seemed to move as though the swath were a battlefield strewn with the dead and the dying of some unearthly war. One might have traced that swath hewn in the timber, with its walls of darkness, and its moonlit ruin, past many a campfire, many such groups of men, for had it started from London it would have reached to Rome, glittering for fourteen hundred miles with the lighted encampments of an army. And still this was

but the forest section of a gigantic path then (1883) in the making, the Canadian Pacific Railway, whose builders were the pioneers of marching Empire.

But in the first camp on the Trail of the Pioneers I can only remember, through the mist of years, a navvy who stood beside me at the fire, a man of middle age, with a rough Scotch face, who, cocking up one shrewd gray eye, said quietly, "I hear you're looking for me?"

I had come a thousand miles to see the General Officer commanding this war of giants, and found a navvy. He glanced at my letter of introduction, scanned my face again, and so with a patient sigh turned back to enjoy the warmth of the red flames. He asked me no futile question as to what I could do, had no illusive hopes, and if he gave me a job it would be only to save me from starving to death in the bush.

One glance had shown him a youth tender and awkward, with a nose long enough to lead, but a chin too weak to follow. Such a chin as that shrinks back from success in life, such a delicate inquiring nose always gets hurt in a fight, and dreamy blue eyes are apt to see much trouble. Perhaps in Mr. Middleton's

sigh there was just a trace of pity. He lent me blankets that night—his own, I think—and next morning took me away in his launch along the coast of Lake Superior. I wanted to serve in his personal following, but he knew too much, and palmed me off that very afternoon upon an unoffending surveyor at Gravel Bay.

The place was called Gravel Bay because there was nothing but rock, a towering precipice, in places abrupt from deep water. The road-bed of the railway had to be hewn out along the edge of the lake, and, apart from costing two hundred and fifty thousand dollars a mile, it was full of nice little problems for the engineers to solve. To circumvent the wily avalanche, to keep the rock-slides from straying across the track, those were the beginnings of wisdom. And after rains the embankments were attacked by cataracts five hundred feet high, thundering down from the sky-line, which had to be persuaded to fall elsewhere.

Then there was the lake always playing tigerish games with the foreshore. A contractor built a wharf under our cliffs, and landed a cargo of stores. Next morning the ship lay in safety, moored head and stern

to the rocks, but wharf and cargo had sunk far beyond human reach. A few weeks later the sea took another bite, this time at Mackay's Harbor, where a big log-camp and the Divisional Storehouses had been newly built on a commodious point of land. This headland of gravel, loosened by the rains, slid down its sloping subsoil of clay, carrying off the buildings, and stores worth two hundred and fifty thousand dollars. The people had barely time for flight before the settlement foundered like a ship.

Our survey party was engaged long hours a day in marking out ground for the railway, and in measuring the work done by the contractors, whose business was to cheat the syndicate. My special occupation was hunting for amethysts, or climbing crags, like a goat, for the pleasure of reaching the top with an unbroken neck. These natural pleasures were sorely interrupted at times by the Boss, who wanted the ground marked out with numbered stakes, guide signs painted on rocks, or the dragging about of chains, tapes, and pickets.

In the evenings I sat in the tent with the Boss, sketching ships and pretty girls in his notebooks, and diverting him from sordid mathematics with most in-

teresting questions. Why was there no blue-colored food? What word would rhyme with Saturday? Or I would favor him with new ideas in speculative astronomy and submarine navigation. I think I was most practical at meal times. His patience was wonderful, and I was very happy.

Indeed, the life was full of interest and variety, with occasional thrills when one tumbled off a cliff, dodged a falling rock, or, climbing from place to place by rope and ladder, came suddenly upon a little casual blasting and an unexpected shower of stones. One's days can never be monotonous when one has much to do with dynamite, for not even woman is more capricious in action. I knew a mule once to roll with a load of dynamite down a hill four hundred feet high. The mule got up, not a bit surprised, and went for the nearest grass, with that dynamite uninjured on her back. Compare that with what happened at Mackay's: five men were sitting in a cabin watching a few sticks of frozen dynamite thaw gently on the stove. The innocent, harmless stuff went off in the process, and dug the men a large grave on the site of their cabin.

Seized as I am with a strong craving to tell dyna-

mite stories, I must limit myself to events at Gravel Bay. Not far from our camp there was an overhanging crag some hundred and twenty-five feet high, known as Death's Head Peak, the scene, during the previous winter, of a dynamite comedy.

The Construction Syndicate allowed no liquor to be sold on the works, and appointed detectives to check the traders who purveyed whisky-and-water ready mixed at five dollars a pint. In the dead of winter, Tom the Whisky-Runner came along with his deep-loaded cariole drawn on the ice-clad lake by a team of dogs. Entering Gravel Bay, he was chased by a detective on snowshoes, and, failing any hope of escape, drew up to await the worst under Death's Head Peak. The detective, having got Tom for sure, was advancing full of confidence, when the Whisky-Runner took from his load a canister of dynamite, lifted the heavy cylinder above his head, and remarked:

"You see that stone?"

The detective saw a stone, projecting from the snow, midway between them.

"When you pass that stone," said Tom, "down comes the cliff."

Then the detective ran for life, and Tom drank to

the health of his retreating enemy. He drank from the canister.

Now, lest Death's Head Peak be ever minded hereafter to drop down bodily on some passing train, we measured it for blasting; the holes were drilled and charged, and next day the general public was warned not to loaf about in the neighborhood. When the fuses were finally lighted our survey boat happened to be passing in front of the cliff, and the general public howled at us to clear out. Away we raced at full speed, but Death's Head Peak rose bodily in the air and came after us.

In the main we won that race, but some of the smaller rocks passed over our heads, and fell a long way to seaward.

With dynamite one got familiar in time, and callous; but the most hardened navvy had a fear of the young medical students for whose support we were all compelled to subscribe. Dynamite is swift but uncertain, but the " doctors " were slow and sure. The ground, too, was so rocky that their patients had to be taken some distance away for interment.

The camp where I lived was the dirtiest on the coast. The cook's wife died of dirt, but the cook was,

to our deep regret, immune, and the seventy Italian navvies who slept in the mess-house loft got dysentery under his treatment. The Surveyor and I had a clean and pleasant tent, but, when we could not find excuse for meals elsewhere, we had to feed in the mess-house. Once, being late, I had supper there alone, and there was trouble among the Italians up in the loft. It seems that one of them had stabbed an Irishman, and in this matter committed a breach of etiquette. Anyway, he was kicked down the hatchway, lit near me with a crash and a howl, then fled for shelter among the cliffs. At midnight he stole back to collect his pay from the timekeeper, but afterwards renounced our company.

With all his patience my Boss, the Surveyor, could not bear with me forever. The cliffs were full of amethysts, and my collection of slabs grew to a rockery just at the door of the tent. The crystals were sharp and prickly, so that when he fell over them at night, he cherished feelings towards me wholly beyond expression. On Sundays his men needed rest, and that was my special day for getting lost, or stuck on the face of some impossible cliff. Then an ill-natured, hard-swearing, and contemptuous expedi-

tion would be sent to my rescue, and the men would complain that they lost their day of rest. At the month's end, when Mr. Middleton came to inspect the works, my Boss reported himself as a camel and me as a straw. He had borne up wonderfully; but Mr. Middleton took me away in the steam-launch.

Morning brought us to Red Rock, a bay set in bright green meadows, dusky forest, and vivid scarlet cliffs; and at the head was an old fort of whitewashed logs, a trading post of the Hudson's Bay Company. There was I cast ashore as a waste product.

Not far from Fort Nipigon was a construction camp, with a street of shacks and tents devoted to the Seven Deadly Sins. The Hotel Vermin, where I lived, derived some romantic interest from the landlord's daughter, who had recently shot and wounded a boarder for failing to pay his bill. I was like to be in the same case unless I could make my escape from Nipigon, so spent my days at a point commanding the bay, hoping that one last steamer would call before the lake froze, for in a few more days the entire coast would be ice-clad. At last a steamer called at the Fort, loaded with men, but before I could reach the wharf she discharged her passengers, then, with-

out a moment's pause, turned tail and bolted out of the harbor. There was no escape for me, any more than there was for those three hundred and seventy-five men left helpless to starve in the forest. Some swindling contractor in Toronto had promised them employment at three dollars and a half a day, rooked them of their passage-money, then turned them loose to die.

Foreseeing danger, I hurried in to warn Camp Nipigon, which quietly prepared for siege. No provisions could be brought in for at least five months to come, and not a single ration could be spared. Work was found for twelve men, but the rest of the strangers camped hungry in the woods, sending us deputations at intervals to beg for mercy. All they got was a side of bacon and a barrel of biscuit, and that under threat of leveled revolvers. In time the poor wretches dispersed, eastward and westward along the line; but the camps, terrified by their very numbers, refused them food, and some tramped two hundred miles eastward along the coast before they found relief.

It was in the wake of their westward drift that I struck out on foot, hoping to win through to the town

of Port Arthur. The snow lay deep, the cold had become intense, and the next lad who attempted the trip was frozen to death on the way. Four miles out, at Camp Roland, I found a twelve-mile section of completed track, a gravel train starting for the rail head, and a party of Swedish navvies for company. We did not enjoy that journey, yet had much reason for gratitude, because, as we lay torpid with cold on the loads of gravel, big sparks of wood from the engine kept setting our clothes on fire, a thoughtful arrangement of Providence which preserved us from that sleep which has no awakening. Arrived at the rail head, the Swedes paid blackmail to the train hands, only fifty cents apiece for all our pleasures. Not caring to attend that levee, I walked on, but was glad of company when the Swedes caught up with me, for we had no word of any language in common, and, since we could not possibly disagree, became the best of friends.

Night had fallen long ago, and we tramped on mile after mile in search of shelter. From horizon to horizon, straight as a ray of light, lay the embankment prepared for the railway, a snow-clad road skirted on either side by a snow-clad clearing, and

that walled on the right hand and the left with forest of impenetrable gloom. At intervals we would stand bewildered, wondering why there was no sign of human life; then move on to escape from the searching cold and the dreadful silence of an abandoned world. Hour after hour we moved like ghosts along the spectral course of white, between walls of darkness, and saw that nightmare avenue reach on to the end of the earth, even to where it singed the setting stars. At last we found the ruins of a wayside cabin, within it a wrecked stove, and a floor free from snow, of rough-cut pine trees. When the stove was red-hot we lay down, wishing for supper and blankets; but the floor was like a bed of knives, and when the fire waned the outer cold stole in. I sat up then, drowsily feeding the stove and hugging it; but very soon there was no more furniture to burn, and the cold came in again. The logs of the cabin, the trees of the forest were freezing, and as their sap expanded into ice, they split with a loud report like a gun-shot. The noise kept waking me out of stupor; but I was very drowsy, and as it was not well to fall asleep I stole out of the cabin to walk on alone down the nightmare avenue through the woods. Presently I came to a black river

barring the way, and across it lay a string of rolling ice-clad logs chained together. I took the logs at a run, and walked on. Day broke, and I went lame with a strained tendon, but contrived to hobble onward. Noon brought me to a wayside camp, where the people had been lately so humbled by pestilence that they allowed me dinner—cash down in advance—and a bottle of horse liniment which put my leg to rights. In the last few weeks no less than twenty-three men had been taken out from that camp and laid on the dump of the railway, with the next load of gravel by way of burial.

Daily, the engines go roaring down that curve swinging their tails of sumptuous carriages, singing their song of triumph over dead men's bones. There never yet was a victory won without pain, or a conquest made save by human sacrifice.

Leaving the sorrowful camp I came in the evening to completed track, and found a gravel train, which at midnight brought me, well-nigh frozen, into Port Arthur. The town was very full, but food at last plentiful, and I found a warm place to sleep—on a billiard table.

II

SINKING

PORT ARTHUR was booming, and fully intended to eclipse Chicago. Once, indeed, when badly lost in the outer forest I came to a touching inscription upon a signpost advising the bears that here Catherine Street met Johnson Avenue. They kept their tryst far from the haunts of men. Among the dipsomaniacs of all nations who thronged the wooden village I witnessed episodes intended to be anything but funny. One day, waiting on the hotel veranda for the dinner-bell, I timed, watch in hand, a battle fought close by between twenty Hungarian navvies and thirty Italians. They fought for possession of the coal wharf, the wages being five dollars a day, and they hurtled like wild boars with knives and revolvers for twenty-five minutes without one combatant, or even a bystander, being hurt. Under that veranda sprawled a poor old drunkard in the ditch, who next week, inheriting a fortune, changed his rags for a silk hat, evening dress, and long boots. Three

days he lived in this condition of splendor, but on the fourth set out for another world. Then there was the tailor's shop, conducted by a pair of handsome brothers who paraded their wares in the street, promenading in boots and breeches, embroidered shirts, and coats of silk corduroy, unspeakably pleased, envied by all beholders. The town was frequently on fire, always gay; and when the local editor protested at the main street being used for a race-course, he was admonished by a letter signed, "Yours in blud, the Gang."

Throughout one glittering week I reveled in chocolate creams and toothache, then resorted to a cheaper hotel and milder forms of debauchery until I could find employment. I was not in great demand, but got a fortnight's work engrossing conveyances for a lawyer, then turned myself loose as a milkman's chartered accountant. His accounts were on slips of paper, carried in all his pockets, and inscribed with cabalistic signs which looked Chinese, yet might have been Hieratic, but I sorted them out, and he told me to sue for my wages.

The third employment was in a backwoods clearing. Probably my master had never employed a man who

talked so brilliantly or on so many themes; but it was mainly conversational talent which I applied to herding his cattle, and hauling his fence-rails in the snow-clad woods, to the chopping of water-holes through the ice of the creek, and the threshing of wheat with a flail. Still, what with his sweet disposition, and his need of inexpensive help, we got on fairly well until one day, when we were threshing stroke on stroke together, I paused to express a thought on paleontology. His flail struck mine, and, rebounding, smote his jaw. He never really liked me after that. Even though relations were strained, I bore no malice, but, as the days dragged on towards Christmas, was filled with charitable thoughts and pious hopes, while the missus filled the larder with everything pleasant to the eye and good for food. The adopted boy, who carried logs for the stove, would ogle me in secret, furtively stroking his stomach; and the smell of the cooking warmed me with memories of home. We were both a little dismayed when on Christmas Eve the family loaded the sleigh and drove off to keep the feast in town, but were dumb with horror when, racing straight for the larder, we found it stripped, with only bare rations for us of bread and bacon.

The dawn of that Christmas broke on log buildings deeply drifted, and pine trees loaded down with newly fallen snow. When I had watered the cattle I went to the threshing-floor, and there, with tired arms, all the day long beat with my flail, parting the grain from the straw. So I was able to pile the mangers with a Christmas feast for the cattle.

A kindly neighbor gave us dinner that day, but when night had fallen, and my work was not nearly done, I sent the orphan boy to kindle the stove and get our supper ready in the house. He did not say that he was offended with me, so when, dead tired, I crossed the starlit clearing to the house, it was without understanding why the windows were dark and the door bolted. Before I could begin the preparing of supper I had to break through the door, and caress that adopted child with hands of blessing.

With the return of the family next day I found myself unpopular, but this engaging household refrained from turning me out until New Year's Eve, it being their religious habit to offer a sacrifice at times of festival. After the long tramp to Port Arthur, the New Year of 1884 found me adrift in the

streets, enjoying a bracing wind at forty degrees below zero.

Without being exactly tempted with any wages, I was presently engaged as "boots" at an hotel for navvies, to clean the spittoons, to wait at table, buck firewood, and chop out the water-hole daily through five or six feet of ice. Then I must carry forty buckets a day, and an extra forty buckets whenever the house was on fire, the average being one large conflagration every fortnight. Spare time was devoted to running errands, making beds, scrubbing floors, tending the stable, and assisting to quiet the boarders when they wanted to shoot the landlord; but all these delights came to a sudden end. The house had been three times on fire, so the date would be on or about 15th February, when the Boss called me up to the loft where a boarder was loudly complaining of his bed. "Jack," said the Boss, for that was my name at the time, "change beds with this gentleman." I resigned.

Things had gone badly with me then, but that I came in for a fortune, a present of twenty-five dollars from home. I lived at the house of a carpenter's wife, whose red hair, thin lips, and pale blue eyes should

have been read as signals of danger. From the first she wanted to borrow my twenty-five dollars, and at this persisted, until in a fatuous mood I confessed to having in five weeks paid her the whole amount for my board. Only by slow degrees she realized that there was nothing left to borrow, that I was no longer of use, and cumbered the earth. She was carving a joint at the time, but, prompt to the idea of business first and pleasure afterwards, she rushed at once to the attack. My hand caught the knife as it struck, breaking the force of the blow, but with a demoniac shriek she stabbed again. Once more I caught the blade, which cut the arteries of my hand and caused a dreadful mess; but she was making a third rush when her husband, entering, seized her round the waist. "Get out!" said he.

But my dignity was ruffled, for the woman had been rude, and I stood to my demand for an apology.

"Clear out," said the carpenter, "or I'll turn her loose!"

This argument was so forcible that I consented to pack my luggage, and only on being assured that my hostess was detained with embraces did I venture across the room with my portmanteau. Next day I

found from her indignant tradesmen that Mrs. Blank had left the country, taking the carpenter and all her personal effects.

My next engagement was as a navvy at a dollar and a quarter a day, working with a section gang to keep the Canadian Pacific Railway in repair. The work consisted of renewing the wooden "ties," or sleepers, and in leveling the track with fresh ballast—all very dull except the run home in the evening. Then the five of us jumped on our hand-car, pumped at the windlass brakes to get a start, and went flying down a seven-mile hill, a wild river on the left, rock and forest piling high on the right, the whirling, blinding snow lashed straight in our faces, and the up-train for Winnipeg expected every moment. Afterwards, if we lived, there would be supper at Kaministiquia Station. On the whole, it was a nice week, and I was sorry when the gangs went out on strike; but in that squabble I had no concern whatever, so shouldered my blankets, and tramped back through the snow to Port Arthur.

There I fell in with a wandering photographer who had pop eyes, a round pink face, and a collection of views of the neighborhood. For him I peddled

photographs, and might have been enriched but that he suffered from pronounced alcoholic depression, and needed forty drinks of whisky every day to correct the symptoms. His pictures, too, developed striking alcoholic effects, whereas my customers liked them plain. Then the supply failed.

Meanwhile I got the local agency for a book written by Queen Victoria. Because the people loved her they wanted copies, and these I ordered from Toronto. The lonely Frontier town was keen with expectation for what seemed like a personal message from Our Lady, but when, after a delay of many weeks, the parcel came, there was fifty dollars to pay and I was penniless. I pawned the parcel for fifty dollars, paid the charges, and handed the goods to my creditor. Then, trusted with one volume at a time, I delivered the books to my customers, got the money, made a settlement of my debts, and from this whirl of finance emerged in my usual condition—destitute.

The spring had come, heralded by the wooden steamer *Queen*, which rammed through the ice-pack on Thunder Bay, and was made welcome by the population with flags, and cheering, a new brass band of deadly potency, and a banquet.

All through the summer the west wind brought clouds in the afternoon, which massed above Thunder Bay, to break upon the walls of Thunder Cape with a blinding, deafening display of electric power. From my little tent outside the town I watched these storms, as the Indians had watched them for ages. Sixteen miles out, sheer from the sea, lifted the basalt walls of Thunder Cape. In size, in shape, in position, this rock is another Gibraltar, and both promontories are molded in the likeness of a man lying stark upon the sea. So the great rock on Lake Superior is known to the Indians as a divine Hero guarded by the Eagle, whose wings make thunder and her eyes the lightning. She nests there every summer, and in her nest preserves the Great Medicine, the Secret of the Life Everlasting.

I thought in those days that I should very soon know the secret, for I had not much food, or any strong hold upon life. I never dreamed as yet that there were others like me, other poor devils, who tried and failed, and tried and failed again; that our name was Legion—the Lost Legion. Only one other outcast did I meet, and we were strongly drawn together, though he was an elderly man and I no more than a

boy. He was a broken officer from the Imperial Service, by trade an explorer, a man of rare gifts, but a perfect martyr to delirium tremens. Of him I learned that from far out beyond the forest, to the westward, there were Plains reaching a thousand miles with no tree or rock; and on these prairies ranged some strange wild cavalry known as the Mounted Police. The business seemed to be rough, full of adventure and hardship, a mixture of Heaven and the Happy Hunting-Grounds, much too good to be true. I appealed to other men who had been to the West. "Oh, yes!" they would answer; "there's plains, and there's police, but there aint no money in it."

Month after month the hunger grew upon me, the craving for the Plains and for that Service, until at last I managed to pay my fare on the first stage of the westward journey, and landing from a steamer at Duluth, the head of Lake Superior, set up my tent in the suburbs. Being washed out that night by a storm, I made a new camp in a ruined house on the hill overlooking the city, where the schoolboys came and played with me. I was a hermit, living on scraps of bread, hunting for work, until I fell in with a kindly old labor agent. He let me live by his stove, where

I got warm, feeding entirely on buttered toast, until he found me work in a dairy. What with the kindness of the people there, the good food, and the work, I had gained strength wonderfully, when on the third day a letter arrived from home. My father had just heard, he said, of a regiment in Western Canada known as the Mounted Police. Would I like to join? He inclosed money to pay for the journey by rail to the recruiting depot at Winnipeg.

That day a local doctor who examined me as to fitness for military service, advised me gravely that I had heart disease. The jumping heart, the flush, the wildly racing blood were indeed the symptoms of a malady not to be found in his books, and its name was —Hope!

III

THE TRAIL OF THE TROOPER

I REACHED Winnipeg on the 3d of November, 1884. Until, turning the last street corner, I came on the gate of Fort Osborne, the whole business was a daydream, and the reality knocked me cold against a wall with sheer astonishment. A sentry was pacing before the gate, an enormous big dragoon. The helmet and crossbelt were white, the tunic scarlet, a belt of glittering brass cartridges carried the revolver for side-arms—white gauntlets—breeches with a broad yellow stripe—long boots—spurs,—they never would take me! Crushed with disappointment at his bulk, ashamed to offer up anything so frail or ignorant as myself, heart jumping with excitement, feet dragging with shyness, I crept nearer, and humbly begged for direction. "You wand to tage on?" said the sentry, "segond door on der left," and he swung away to hide a grin.

They must have been hard up for recruits; the sentry, a German baron, said so afterwards when he

came off duty, and the sergeant in charge of the detachment remarked that the Outfit had sure gone to the devil. Sure, one poor little devil had come to the Outfit. They fed me, gave me blankets to sleep in, were kind to me, and next day shipped me off by noon train to the Regimental Headquarters at Regina.

The dream had all come true, for as the train rolled westward I saw the Canadian Plains reaching away forever, and unbent so far as to patronize two merely civilian youths who asked me where I was bound for. There was horror in their eyes when I told them I belonged to the Mounted Police, earnest compassion in their tone, as they warned me of a more than unpleasant life, an early and most disagreeable death. Them I derided.

A trooper was shivering on the platform when, in the small hours of the night, the train pulled up at Regina. He took me to the town detachment, where I slept, and in the morning showed me the way to Barracks. The Plain was a tawny ocean, flecked with a foam of snowdrifts, from which a thin mist rolled, and broke on what seemed to be a black reef perhaps three miles away. As I drew nearer, following the trail, I saw a fleck of color blaze out above low roofs,

the Union Jack, and heard the faint clear cry of a bugle.

What most appealed to me in the next few days was an extraordinary new phenomenon in nature, the regular recurrence of meals; and when, after a fortnight, I tried to put on my old civilian waistcoat, it would not button, either above or below. I was choked with sheer glory at wearing the Imperial scarlet, faint with pride when I first walked into town. The drills, "stables," "fatigues," "rides," and "guards," were alike splendid new games at which I was always a duffer, but ever so willing. No longer hopeless, no longer sinking from depth to depth, relieved of the old anxiety as to food, I began shyly to uncurl, to find vent in those engaging puppyisms which are always so charming in the young. When I was arrested for fighting, the weapons proved to have been billiard-balls.

In this community of the Police every life was a vivid romance in the making; every man in the barrack-room was hero, fool, or villain, generally all three, in some quaint tragedy or ghastly comedy.

The man who slept next to me on the right was a waif raised in some wandering circus as a contortion-

ist. The man on my left was eldest son of a marquis. In the opening chapter I told an anecdote of Tom the Whisky-Runner. He was a larrikin in an Australian mining-camp, then tramp and sailor, before he became whisky-runner, and soldier,—his bed was in the corner of that room,—and now he is a prosperous farmer.

Dutchy Koerner was a horse-thief and a desperate criminal, driven into the Mounted Police as his only refuge from justice. Afterwards he deserted, and was riding into the United States on a stolen horse when he met with a Vigilance Committee out on the war-path after desperadoes. He had always with us professed his contempt for Vigilantes, but this Committee was certainly most efficient, for they recognized Dutchy and hanged him. That same Committee called later at a ranch owned by two of our ex-constables. In the corral the Committee found a bunch of stolen cattle, and without formality dragged one of the partners out of the house and hanged him. Then the other ex-policeman rode in from the Plains, and, knowing nothing of the lynching, hailed the Vigilantes with a shout of welcome. "Glad to see you, boys! Been out a-hunting for you. Me and my

partner have rounded up a bunch of stock that must have been stolen somewheres; we've got them waiting for you in the corral. Why, boys, what's wrong with you?" And then he saw!

Smith's father—that was not the name—was usually addressed as His Excellency, and Smith began his career as a naval officer. Twice he won medals for saving life, and his rise in the service was rapid until a private calamity unseated his reason. Time healed that wound, and as a trooper in an irregular corps he served in one of the early South African campaigns. Again his promotion was rapid, so that he was captain and adjutant of his regiment, when in a memorable engagement he was shot through the skull. He lived, recovered his physical health, and was heard of next as a farmer in Manitoba. Of course he failed, the English gentleman being as much at home on a farm as an eagle in a henroost. So he enlisted in the Mounted Police, and the very first day recognized an officer on the parade ground. That officer had been a trooper under him in South Africa, and now their positions were reversed. The officer in question was latterly one of the brilliant squadron leaders of Strathcona's Horse.

When I joined the Police, Smith was a corporal, but he got into trouble for some casual peppering of recruits with a service revolver. When we met he was a prisoner, I was prisoner's escort, herding him about with a gun, and we became friends. We served together in the campaign which followed, and afterwards Smith deserted. He enlisted in the United States Cavalry and deserted that. It was as a tramp that he came back to Canada, and Corporal John Mackie, the novelist, befriended him at Willow Creek in the Cypress. From thence he managed to drag himself northwards to Fort Saskatchewan, and there, at the Police Hospital, was tended in his last days by one of his old comrades. "I have fought my last battle, Harry," he whispered, just at the end, "my last battle—and lost." Then the poor tramp was given a captain's funeral, and men who had served with him fired the last salute. So ended the tale of a man with a broken heart.

In later years I kept record of what befell the men I served with, so far as facts were known. The results are too terrible to publish. So many gallant gentlemen were killed or frozen to death on duty, were slain in battle, or died by their own hand; but still a

much larger number have left the ranks of the Lost Legion and become successful men; one has gained the Victoria Cross, a few made fortunes in the Klondike, and most of all were the retired, who left no records at all, and are quietly prospering.

Winter came to the Plains, not furtively as in England, seeking out weak lungs, but brilliant, terrible, and bewildering. First came the snow, providing most tenderly for the living seeds in the earth. Then, under a cloudless sky, demoniac hurricanes swept up the powdery snow in blinding sheets from the ground, covering all trails, hiding all landmarks, so that a man caught even between his house and his barn was like to be lost and perish.

In one blizzard I was sent with three prisoners—a white man, a negro, and an Indian—to carry lamps from the canteen to the mess-roon. Midway between the buildings we got lost, and I drew my revolver to be ready if either of my charges tried to bolt. They chaffed me gently, knowing that the weather was so much more deadly than my marksmanship. I put the Indian ahead, and he smelt the way for us to the nearest buildings. A few days later such a blizzard as that swept through a Dakota township, and a hundred and

seventy people were frozen to death, including the mistress of the school with all her pupils.

Only less treacherous were the calm days, forty, fifty, sixty degrees below zero, when the still dry air was like a draught of champagne, and one went wild with sheer delight at being alive. Then came peril for travelers, for the least disorder of the body withdraws blood from the skin, the cold, striking unnoticed, may strike deep without the slightest warning of pain, and a frozen man be only conscious of languor, the delicious languor of the last sleep.

Late in December the Northern outposts had to be re-enforced, and as twenty volunteers were called for, we were all crazy to go. Each of the men finally selected harnessed his horse to a sleigh, which carried him, with his rations, forage, and bedding. The officer and the senior sergeant took their wives in a covered sleigh, with a stove and plenty of furs. It was on the third day out that the expedition got lost on the Salt Plains, and traveled far on into the night before they found the trail, which had been drifted over by a recent storm. The night was cold, some sixty odd degrees below zero, so that everybody was more or less frozen and exhausted, when " Sheppey," a little Eng-

lishman, found that his chum, "the Doctor," was missing. Sheppey went back three miles before he found the Doctor, badly frozen and stuck in a drift, with his horse entirely done for. Sheppey changed horses with the Doctor, and, having saved his life, most generously punched his head. Broad awake, and resentful, the Doctor told Sheppey that another man besides himself was lost, and the heroic lad set out to find him also. Tracking by starlight miles out from the trail of the expedition, Sheppey caught up at last with Crook, who was busy chasing a planet and would not desist from the hunt. Moreover, Crook was a bad man to handle, standing six foot six, of gigantic build, and mad with delirium. The giant was fresh then from the West Indies, where he had been yachting, his blood was impoverished, and, running beside his sleigh, he had become exhausted, then drove on in a profuse perspiration which froze upon his skin.

Little Sheppey jumped on top of the giant and punched his head, but though the fight was prolonged and furious, Crook was beyond all rousing. Nobody knows how Sheppey managed to get his comrade back to the expedition, but, like a tug towing a battleship, he came into camp triumphant. The Doctor was

nursed for a fortnight at a relay station of the stage line, but Crook lay for forty days between life and death before his brain cleared and he rallied. A special relief party brought him back to us at Regina, and it was then that we heard the first rumors of the war-storm brewing in the North.

IV

WAR

IN the big barrack-room, while the stove glowed red-hot, and the ice of the water-pails melted, we would spend the evening at cards, or cleaning our harness for a parade, until the bugle called First Post. Then as we rolled down our blankets on the trestle-beds, the whole score of us would be moved by a common impulse to Bedlam games, wherein we hurtled together like wild boars; or a peaceful time, when we made Fat Thompson sing, or our elders waxed contentious in high debate, while we Ring-Tailed Snorters of less than two years' service were not allowed to speak.

Mutiny, the teamster, would begin the trouble with some random wager.

"Say, I've got fifteen dollars that says there'll be war within the month."

That would rouse the Corporal in charge.

"Oh, go soak your head! I say war! Why, where's

the grass for their ponies? The nitchies can't fight us before June."

"Ahm thinking," purred a Scotch voice, "that ye're no calculating on this Louis Riel—forbye his veesions——"

"Visions be damned!" saith Mutiny. "This here Riel's a practical man with his tail a-waving. Look what he done on Red River in 'seventy."

"Ran like a rabbit!" the Corporal jeered at Mutiny. "Him and his hull blooming Republic, when they seen Wolseley's column—couldn't see their tails for dust. You ask old Forty-twa—he was right there."

"Ahm thinking——" began the Black Watch veteran. But Mutiny called his fifteen dollars to witness that we should have war before the end of March.

"Why, look a-here,"—he ate tobacco, and spat at long range into the hissing stove,—"here's Riel up North right now, with four or five hundred half-breeds, old buffalo runners just spoiling for a scrap with us. Poundmaker is getting proud, and Big Bear has his tail up—which means that we've got to fight the whole outfit of Crees. They've sent runners to old Crowfoot, and the Blackfoot Confederation's

dancing. The Sioux are out to howl; and if that aint enough, there's them Fenian Irish outfits ready to jump in when our fur flies. You bet your socks there's all of five thousand men, and d'ye think they're going to sit purring till we send for an army? Not much! Who says they'll wait for grass?"

"Oh, go away and die!" said the Corporal.

"Here! Dollars talk!" cried Mutiny, gesticulating with a roll of notes. "Plank down your iron dollars. I'll stake you even money we get wiped out."

"Ahm thinking this Louis Riel is a'most as windy as auld Mutiny. He'll no' come up to the scratch, waur luck, for we've too mony men."

"Hear him!" yelped Mutiny. "Too many men! We're not five hundred strong, and half of us a heap of Piebiters! Just look at 'em grinning in them five beds there—one grin to each bed. Oh, you wolf-mouthed, red-eyed, tear-a-bone-out, buck-hero toughs of the wild Plains!"

Last Post was sounding, and the Orderly Corporal had come in, who stood awaiting Mutiny's leisure before he called the roll.

"Er—excuse me, Mistah—er Mutiny, I won't detain you. Answer your names!"

He called the roll, then read the Orders—all hands warned for the North. The war had come!

The French-Indian half-breeds of the West, a forlorn remnant of the lost Empire of France, had never fully consented to English rule. Working faithfully as voyageurs and hunters for the Hudson's Bay Company, they cherished still their ancient hatred of our race, and had in 1814-16 and again in 1870 revolted in open war against the advancing settlements of Canada. Of late years they had built their cabins six hundred miles beyond the last Canadian village in the West, in a lonely glade beside the South Saskatchewan River. Again our marching Empire had rolled past them, and now a surly Government denied them a title to their farms. So in their discontent they listened to an orator of their own blood, a romantic visionary claiming inspiration from on high to set up a Heavenly Republic. Louis Riel told his people to wear once more their old-time deerskin shirts, to take their rifles for war. The white settlers and the Mounted Police were to be driven away, the bison would come back to the Plains, and they with the Indian tribes should live at peace—a Republic of the Hunters.

They were simple as they were brave, and, asking for a sign, were told by their leader that on the 17th of March he would blot out the sun and make total darkness over the whole earth.

All this came true, as he had prophesied, and the Cree nation joined Riel with over two thousand warriors. The Blackfeet wavered, roused by Riel's messengers, chaffed by the men of our little helpless detachments. The danger would be awful if they rose, for the settlers had scarcely a rifle among them, and our regiment was weak even for its work in time of peace. To the East lay a thousand miles of forest, shutting us off from help until the new railroad was finished, and to the West six hundred miles of mountains barring us out from succor. Our chief, Colonel Irvine, scratched his sorrel head, and knew it was very awkward. How was he to find an army to suppress this Heavenly Republic in the North?

He scratched up ninety-six men. On Sunday (17th March, 1885), while we were all in a rush of preparation, the sun went black, the stars shone out from the noon sky, and we had to stop work in the darkness, knowing that this total eclipse was the sign

for the fighting tribes to rise, for the massacre of our far-strung settlements.

We had to cross three hundred miles of unbroken snowfield, where there was not an ounce of food for horse or man, and that little fact reduced our army to a convoy of sleighs laden with forage. We saw the Colonel's sorrel top go roan with worry, but what with his discipline, his horsemanship, and perfect service of scouts, we made that three-hundred-mile march at an average of forty-two miles a day, through a hostile country, without being cut to pieces. Gentlemen of the Imperial Army, please note that record.

We marched with scouts ahead, vedettes in our front, then an advance-guard and rear-guard of cavalry covering the long procession of sleighs. My place, as a mere recruit, was with the transport. We made our fourth camp on the Salt Plains, drenched all of us to the skin with a sopping thaw. We set up the tents, wrung out our boots, and slept; but at 3.30 A. M., when reveillé sounded, the weather had changed, it was twenty-five degrees below zero, and our clothes were stiff ice from the waist downwards. Each man had his moccasins—skin-shoes for cold weather—ready in the pockets of his buffalo overcoat; and all

of us were ready except two. The Scout-Interpreter had been careless, and lost a big toe.

I was ignorant of the climate, had not kept my moccasins within reach, could not get them out of the transport, and spent fifteen minutes dragging on my frozen cavalry boots. When we marched I thought it was cramp which gripped me from the knees to the heels, and though it was difficult to move, I trotted beside a sleigh, wondering what caused me so much pain. My little growls would have done no good to anybody, and where all were uncomfortable it was better not to complain. After about eighteen miles I lay on the sleigh, and the fellows told me that it would serve me right if I froze. Would I freeze like a man rather than run behind like a dog? Then they belabored me with advice.

At the noon halt I was told off on picket to guard camp, but, not feeling well enough, went sick.

The Hospital Sergeant found that the chafing of the frozen leather as I ran had almost severed the toes of the right foot, and that I was solidly frozen up to the calves, of no more use to the Colonel.

Chafing with snow would have rubbed away the tissues, heat would have resulted in death by gangrene;

so for seven hours of the afternoon march I sat on a sleigh-box luxurious, with six ounces of brandy inside, and my feet in a bucket of water kept cool with snow. After supper came a general collapse from shock, and the pain which results from a scalding. That night the officers gave their tent to the sick, for despite the use of goggles we had several men already totally blind from the glare on ice-crusted snow. Next day there were sixty-five of us blind because of a hot mist rising from the snow glare. I went blind that day.

Some of our civilian frieghters, unable to keep the pace, fell astern and were captured; and the stage station which we reached that night had just been sacked by the rebels. Our camp was pitched as usual, but with a man in each tent to drop the canvas if a shot were fired, and a third of our whole force on the alert. By day we were helplessly blind, but at night the pain is eased and one is able to see. From my place in a corner of the log-cabin I watched the Colonel seated before a red blaze of fire, while a scout gave him news of an ambush prepared for us at Batoche. There was bare ground on the trail ahead, at the hill by the Church of St. Antoine, a place very difficult for sleighs, the woods on either side being lined with rifle-

pits, and the enemy's whole force in waiting. Would the Colonel be pleased to step in? Months afterwards I found in Riel's private diary the note of which this is a rough translation: "The Spirit of God speaks to me concerning the Police . . . 'if you take that road there,' the Holiness designated the road which passed under the Church of St. Antoine, going upwards, 'you will yet be in time to take them. There must be no resting until you reach that hill.' The Spirit of God pointed to the hill which is just beyond Batoche."

We struck camp at midnight and marched, and no man's hand must leave the grip of his carbine, no one must speak above a whisper, while we crept past the ambush by a different trail, and all day long drove on through sparkling, frosted woodlands and white glades, a very quiet, suffering little army, for the most part blind. We were the forlorn hope of Western Canada, on us depended thousands of women and children marked out for butchery, outrage, death at the stake, and every nameless horror of Indian war. I think the Spirit of God was partly with us that day.

As it was cold, a man was told off to keep me awake

in the sleigh-bed by punching me in the ribs; it would not have been safe to sleep.

In my little-puppy days I had read books of adventure about nice clean boys, dressed in buckskin suits, who scalped the Redskin, escaped from packs of wolves, and had thrilling times in canoes along the Saskatchewan. That day, as we crossed the ice on the South Branch of the Saskatchewan, I must needs have a look at the romantic river, so with reluctant fingers dragged my eyelids open for just one glance.

Now I must try to explain the shape of the seat of war into which we had entered. Two rivers born in the Rocky Mountains come rolling eastward across the Plains, and after a course of seven hundred miles these two branches meet to form the Great Saskatchewan. Above their junction, up the South Branch, was Batoche, the Rebel capital near which Mr. Riel had politely arranged an ambush. Leaving that astern, we crossed the South Branch, to enter the country between the rivers, then headed for Prince Albert, the threatened settlement, upon the North Branch, distant some fifty miles. To the west of that village, up the North Branch, was Fort Carlton, a post of the Hudson's Bay Company, held by D Troop of the

Mounted Police, with some Volunteers, and commanded by Superintendent Crozier. These three positions, Batoche, Prince Albert, and Fort Carlton, formed a triangle, the connecting trails being each about fifty miles long.

We reached Prince Albert late, after a sixty-mile march, and as our advance-guard rode down the village trail the sentries of the local Volunteers did us the honor to present arms, standing, with many blushes at the salute, under a fire of chaff. For five miles we followed the bank of the North Saskatchewan, among log-houses aglow with warmth and comfort, and so reached our camping-place at last, the detachment barracks of the Mounted Police. There I was left in company with several men who were still totally blind, while after a day's rest the expedition marched to relieve Fort Carlton.

The rebels from Batoche, reluctant in a blue funk, were marching on Carlton, the Colonel was burning trail to get there first, while Crozier had to sit in the fort, eating his tongue until re-enforcements came. He had hoped for our column on the 24th, waited through the 25th, and saw the dawn break on the 26th; forbidden in plain terms to leave the fort, thinking the coun-

try lost unless he struck, mad to get out and fight, amazed at seeing himself behave so prettily. Then, in presence of the whole garrison, the Hudson's Bay Company factor called Crozier a coward. After that this hot Irish gentleman could bear no more, broke loose from discipline, threw his own career to the winds, and wanted to get killed.

He had sent out a party to get supplies from Duck Lake trading-post before it was seized by the advancing rebels, but the enemy rolled back that detachment in headlong flight to the fort. Instantly Crozier sounded "Boot and Saddle," paraded his sixty Police and thirty-five Volunteers, and marched. The man who had called him a coward stayed behind.

Some eight miles south of the fort, Crozier's party met the whole force of rebels marching on Carlton.

The Hunters were not quite ready, but must have time to surround the white men and get under cover before they began to fight. That is why Chief Beardy of the Crees came strolling up to Crozier with a flag of truce. There was much talking, for the chief stood making an oration, and Joe Mackay interpreted, and Crozier bent down in his saddle, listening thoughtfully. Slowly the Indians and half-breeds were get-

ting into position, forming a horseshoe line around the Police, until Beardy got tired of his oration, and, speaking still of peace, tried to snatch the Interpreter's carbine. Joe pulled his revolver and riddled the Indian with lead.

Now the surrounding woods began to spit flames at the Police as they lay behind their sleighs drawn up across the road. Crozier swung round in the saddle.

"Fire, boys!" he yelled.

"Please, sir, you're right in the line of fire!" said the seven-pounder gun.

"Oh, never mind me!" answered Crozier; and the fight began, the first round from the seven-pounder wiping out seven rebels.

"Most unfair," said the half-breeds, because, what with the discharge and an explosive shell, "it shot twice every time it was fired."

Again the gun was loaded, this time with the shell first and the powder afterwards. The Mounted Police were never quite at home with artillery, and of course the "beastly thing jammed." The horses had been led to the rear, the men fought from cover of the sleighs, officers standing; and though there was

nothing to shoot at but smoke, the well on an Indian farm near by was afterwards found jammed to the brim with dead bodies. As the position became more and more desperate, our Volunteers made a gallant attempt to charge, but the snow was five feet deep and they were butchered.

The snow was getting all bloody, an advance was impossible, and the enemy were closing down on the rear when, after twenty-five minutes, Crozier gave the order to retreat. The horses were shot down as they were harnessed, barely sleighs enough could be saved to carry eight wounded men, and twelve were left dead in the drifts when at last the retreat began. One man, out of sight behind some bushes, dragging himself through the drifts with a broken leg, saw the rear-guard covering the sleighs fall back round a curve of the road. He was left behind.

This Newitt was a Canadian, a shop assistant from Prince Albert, where his mother lived; and, curiously astray from his line of business, the gallant youngster made his peace with Heaven. Drowsy with pain, he saw an Indian stand over him with clubbed rifle to dash out his brains, and his hand was shattered warding off the blow. Again the rifle swung, but was caught away

just at the last moment by a half-breed who knew the lad. After that Newitt lay for ten weeks a prisoner before he was rescued, but the Republic of the Hunters obeyed the laws of war with punctilious courtesy, and their honor was not stained by any outrage. The Indians plundered, burned, scalped, and massacred, but not those wild children of the old French Empire.

Very slowly, for the sake of the wounded, Crozier's forlorn retreat moved down on Carlton, and came to the fort just as the Colonel's relief column swept in through the gates. The man who called Crozier a coward was there to receive them. He had set the Plains on fire.

Carlton was a fort of the Hudson's Bay Company where the buffalo runners in old times delivered their meat, to be carried away by yearly canoe-fleets bound for the ultimate North. The little fort lay in the valley of the North Saskatchewan, commanded on all sides from the edge of the Plains above. In view of the peril of the Prince Albert settlement, Carlton could not be held, but the stores of enormous value were not to be left to the enemy. On the 27th the garrison was invited to sack the shop for their own benefit; the saddles were chopped to pieces, the provisions were

soaked with petroleum, the rifles broken, and all things made ready for flight. A mortally wounded man died and was buried, patrols were fired on close outside the fort, there were wild rumors of treason, hourly alarms. So the day passed.

At midnight some refugee women lighted a stove in the gate-house—and, above, the naked stove passed through an upper room. There the Sergeant-Major, preparing mattresses for the wounded, had left a pile of hay. That hay caught fire.

In the last chapter I mentioned " the Doctor " badly frozen on the Salt Plains. He, the son of an English General Officer, was Hospital Orderly tending two desperately wounded men in the next room. When he found that the house was on fire, he knew well that these men must be burned to death in their beds unless he kept back the flames, and made such a battle for their lives that both escaped in time. The Orderly had his face burned so that nobody might know who he was, but he remained on duty quietly tending the wounded.

The gate-house was in flames, and the fire extended swiftly until three sides of the fort were burning. Sleighs were being loaded with wounded and refugees;

horses, half mad with fright, were put in harness; the ground was shaken with explosions, the flames, towering far aloft, were giving signal to the enemy; and still two hundred and fifty people were locked in that burning square until the ringing axes finished their work, and a road was opened through the old stockade. And then began the night retreat on Prince Albert.

Within twelve hours after Duck Lake fight a scout rode down into Prince Albert, warning us there to be prepared for the worst. There could be no doubt now that the fighting tribes would rise: the Crees who surrounded us, the Assiniboines in the South, the ranging bands of Sioux, the terrible Blackfoot confederation. In those days Prince Albert was the most northerly village in the New World; seventeen hundred miles from civilized Canada, seventeen hundred miles removed from succor. Already the rich and populous settlement was being abandoned, the village was jammed with refugees; and although the Colonel, in passing, had arranged for some sort of defense, our Volunteers were fierce rather than formidable. They were arming with shot-guns and sticks.

When, in the dead of night, the news of Duck Lake aroused us all from sleep, in frantic haste merchants

and clergy, doctors and clerks, began to haul firewood, good four-foot logs, from the backyards, which were piled into most formidable walls. Within ten hours they built a fort of refuge, inclosing the Presbyterian Church and Manse, the only brick buildings then in the village. By noon the work was finished, the women and children were under shelter; indeed, as I was carried in from the barracks, I saw the Hudson's Bay post, together with all the houses, abandoned to its fate.

A civilian sentry presented arms to me at the gate, an honor due only to the dead, so I chaffed him—we always chaffed those wonderful town guards. Within the stockade there was confusion of heaped-up merchandise, but that was peaceful compared with the church, which was mess-house, main-guard, women's quarters, powder magazine, and nursery, all in a space of thirty feet by forty. I was laid in the left-hand corner of the dais, and from thence, whenever I got hungry, I would send little boys out foraging. I met two of those same boys in 1901 as veteran troopers returned from the South African War, and they told me that the earliest memory of their lives was that fort of refuge.

Through the long, grim hours of that day and the next, I watched from my corner quaint scenes of unfailing comedy. Each mother, the moment she found a camping-place under some table, set up her housekeeping, made a complete home, gravely washed her babies, solemnly smacked them, put them to bed, crooned them to sleep with song, and did her hair. With her mouth full of hairpins she would protest most vigorously if some chance Volunteer, dining at the table overhead, poured tea down the back of her neck, or protruded muddy feet into her parlor. Rival households disparaged one another through a suspended shawl; friendly families gossiped with only the legs of the table erect between them; and as to the scandal—I would blush to the roots of my hair.

The Bishop—Saskatchewan Jack of glorious memory—abandoned by his panic-stricken court, got so lonely at Immanuel College that at last he loaded his treasure, a case marked "Bibles," on the Episcopal sleigh, and came to seek refuge with the rest. Well I remember his Lordship swinging his short legs as he sat on the corner of a table eating a hard-tack biscuit, while in impressive measures he chanted the iniquities of the Mounted Police. One would think

that in a time of general peril these profane troopers might shrink at least from open robbery, but even his case of Bibles had not been respected. I may mention that our boys of the Prince Albert detachment found something more than spiritual consolation within that case marked "Bibles," and were fattening on the luxuries of the Episcopal larder while his Lordship fasted in church.

As to the Presbyterian minister, he stood in his pulpit that evening without any impetus to preach. A heap of loose gunpowder lay on the dais beside him, from which he served rations to a string of Volunteers as they filed past him, peaceably smoking their pipes. The space under the church floor was rumored to hold thirty barrels of powder, to be touched off in case the Indians succeeded in breaching our stockade.

The women gossiped cheerily as they washed up the dishes after supper, the swinging lamps were lighted as the daylight waned, men waiting their turn for guard sat gingerly nursing unaccustomed rifles, and the little children were playing at being Red Indians while their mothers tried to hunt them off to bed. Such was the calm before the big storm broke.

Some sixteen miles from the village, two weary

scouts came to anchor on a deserted farm. They had fed their horses, strangled and cooked a fowl, and were just sitting down to supper when a couple of half-breed rebels strolled in through the kitchen door. The smell of the chicken appealed to them also, for they were very hungry; but, as lying is smoother than war, they sequestered that supper without any needless bloodshed, merely announcing the white men prisoners and themselves the advance-guard of Riel's army. The two scouts paused for no details, but with touching credulity believed, and bolted through the window, leaving their supper to the enemy. They mounted their horses, lashed themselves into hysterics as they rode, and an hour later came at full gallop into the village, yelling that the enemy had arrived.

The Carlton garrison had entered Prince Albert at sundown. Camped at the detachment barracks, the men, worn out with seventy hours on duty, just saw to the comfort of their horses, then went to sleep where they dropped. There was no rest for them, for at that moment the alarm rang out which was to keep them on parade all night guarding the fort of refuge.

From my corner in the church I was lazily watching the minister as, with queer clerical gestures and a tin

cup, he administered rations of powder. By my feet sat one of our corporals, still blind from the glare of the snow, and he predicted disaster at intervals. "I could see," said he, "but for these beastly lamps"—for snow-blind men can use their eyes at night.

A man rushed in at the door howling "To arms!" The bell in the cupola clashed out a wild alarm; the Corporal was fighting over my legs with a Volunteer who had tried to steal his carbine; somebody with a revolver was threatening to shoot everybody else who was frightened; a mob of men were running about waving their rifles and screaming; hundreds of women and children were swarming in for shelter; and over all the din I could hear what seemed like the clear, insistent rattle of musketry. It was only hammering; the removal of a barn obstructed the view from the ramparts, but it made very passable musketry. The women were having a good cry, the girls howled, but the little boys were pleased all to pieces. Two bright-eyed youngsters promised to filch me a gun.

As for me, in the first crash of the panic my heart made one big leap of fear, but, as I could not run about, I had no occasion to howl. From the window

overhead there might be some decent shooting out over the rampart, so, taking my crippled revolver, I tried to climb up; tried and tried again, but always came tumbling down. If one had never made a wholesale ass of one's self, but always behaved with propriety, how deadly dull it would be to look back on life! That never yet bored me.

Over three hundred women now thronged the church, and, seized with a sudden self-consciousness, I groveled in horrified concealment under my rug against the wall. Then, when only my blushes were visible, six women and seven children camped on my bed. Perhaps it was the scarlet uniform jacket which brought that distracted fold to me with frantic appeals for help; and of course, for my honor, I lied, vowing to restore their lost husbands, brothers, and sons, yea, sires and uncles also, if they would only be good and keep quiet.

Slowly the tumult lulled to exhausted calm, broken at times even then with yells of fright when somebody smashed glass with a bayonet to save us from suffocation, or one of those blessed Volunteers let off his demon rifle, boring a hole through the roof. At last I saw a man stand at the door with tidings, and

through an intense hush of expectation a wave of whispering carried his news through the church. The enemy were still some miles away from the village.

The dawn broke after a while, and it was Palm Sunday.

There had been a bewildering rush of events: the march to the North, Duck Lake fight, the burning and evacuation of Carlton, the retreat on Prince Albert, the great night panic. Afterwards there was a lull of seven weeks, in which no news reached the village. We did not take ourselves too seriously. Ours was only a little affair of outposts, whereas England was on the instant verge of war against Russia. In presence of that Titanic argument our sorest grievance was lack of newspapers.

Poor Louis Riel saw visions and dreamed dreams, communed with angels, and wrote it all down in his diary. His Republic of the Hunters, wholly engrossed with thought, sat in a state of enchantment perfectly harmless. But the tribes had risen and wrapped our settlements in flames, spreading devastation for several hundred miles across the Plains. In the whole of Central Saskatchewan we had at last but two strong-

holds left, where the settlers were in refuge at Prince Albert and Battleford.

Then came the turning of the tide. Those old allies, the Cowboys and the Police, secured the South-Western stock-range and all Alberta by soothing the riotous nerves of the Blackfoot nation. Thence, marching to the relief of Battleford, they engaged and defeated the Crees. An expedition of five thousand men came up from Eastern Canada, which, after surmounting many difficulties, gave battle to the enemy at Batoche, and in a three-days' siege wiped out the Republic of the Hunters. And so, with occasional actions, swift, bloody, and conclusive, the tide of war rolled on into the very fastnesses of the Northern Forest, where the tribes at last dispersed. Riel surrendered to take his trial for treason felony; and with many expressions of mutual regret we hanged him. The campaign was bitter shame for us of the Mounted Police, that we should have let our parishioners so get out of hand.

It was late in May when our two troops from Prince Albert came down at last out of the Forest. The horses were dying of starvation, the men had lived for weeks by snaring rabbits, and the homeward

march dragged out long, hungry miles until one summer day they came to the edge of the Plains. Then someone remembered: "Why, boys, it's the twenty-fourth!" and he flung his sombrero in the air. "The twenty-fourth of May!" cried a man behind him, as he sent a bullet whizzing through the hat: "Queen's Birthday, you fellows!" Every hat went skywards, a royal salute with revolvers riddled them in the air, and all along the line rang out the National Anthem.

So our boys rode home to us over prairies ablaze with flowers; steamers swung past us down the North Saskatchewan, deep with victorious regiments homeward bound; our long patrols went out to scour the Plains, to fight destroying fires in long grass, to execute justice, to vindicate the Peace; and then the mighty winter came roaring down, and the white months went by until a year had rolled over our heads since Duck Lake fight.

We had an understanding among ourselves that compulsory church parades were opposed to the spirit of religion. We would walk three miles to attend free evensong, but forced matins were a duet between the officer commanding and the Bishop; and he who responded, sang, or offered up real coins, must be dipped

in the ice-girt river. But when on the anniversary of Duck Lake fight the Bishop called for an armed parade to the memory of our dead, we responded, we sang, we offered up real coins.

As for me, should I tell the annals of a bed, a pair of crutches, and a walking-stick? I think not. And yet of all my years in the Lost Legion that has most humors to look back upon. I had time to watch. Where each man's life was gemmed with bright adventure, and hundreds of lives made up the tangled skein, one threads through tortuous byways of memory, and has an epic for transcription, not a tale.

V

PEACE

THROUGH a long convalescence I had written bad verses, worse fiction, and sold incredibly vile sketches in water-color, helped in the spelling and grammar of local journalism, and traded in cigars, giving credit, much to the amusement of the troop.

Now with the spring of 1886, though the wound upon my foot refused to heal, I was able to wear boots, to walk, to ride, to do full duty and forget that I was an invalid.

Ever since the war the regiment had been restive, and our chiefs reported the young men hard to hold, for troop after troop broke out in mutiny which had to be punished, and there was a heavy tale besides of suicides and desertions. We meant no harm, but we were all very young and nervous, with the blood burning in our veins, and the whole pack of us, not knowing what we wanted, were like young wolves howling for trouble. The officers did their best, drilling us

severely; but then D Troop at Battleford must needs fall sick of typhoid, and Death swept through the tents.

So our F Troop was called upon for thirty men to take over the Battleford district, and I got leave to join this detachment, hoping that change of air would heal my wound.

For the first day's march there were farms at intervals, then came a belt of old sand-drift overgrown with pines, and beyond that, for a hundred miles or so, no house, no bush, but a swell of golden grass rolling away to violet distances. Clear down the years comes the especial memory of Eagle Creek, where, sunk three hundred feet below the plains, there is a chain of pools, and an acre or so of meadow starred with the ashes of old campfires. The little foxes played there while it was cool before bedtime, a crane stood on one leg, hoping for a fish by way of supper, and the rim of the shadowed canyon glowed orange against the sky. But when a cloud of dust arose behind the rim of the high plains, and the tramp of our horses sounded soft thunder-notes of warning, the little foxes crept with their mother to earth, and the crane flapped lazily away into the blue gloom of even-

ing. Presently a mounted man came out upon the edge of the ravine, the sun glowing chestnut upon his horse, flame upon the scarlet of his coat, star specks on bright accouterments. Then in half-sections came our twenty riders, each man with a carbine poised across the horn of the stock saddle, and many a point of glittering light upon his harness. At a word of command the riders dismounted to lead, while behind them appeared five wagons, each with driver and off man, and a pair of troopers, our rear-guard, waiting for the dust to abate before they followed down the breakneck hill. Our fellows were dressed in suits of brown canvas, or fringed deerskin, or gray flannel shirts with a silk kerchief round the neck, or an old red jacket, just as we pleased, long boots, sombrero hats, belts glittering with a line of brass cartridges, and big revolvers ready at the right hand. Ours were hard-featured, weather-beaten, dusty, great big men, with such clear, far-searching eyes, such pride of bearing, swaggering gallantry, and wild grace in the saddle that one despairs of ever, with words or colors, making a picture worthy of the theme.

The teamsters got their wagons down the hill, shaving disaster by the very edge, and glad to reach

the bottom with unbroken bones. The mounted men had formed up, and were unsaddling; the wagons made a second line in their rear at forty-foot intervals, then a rope was stretched from wheel to wheel, to which each trooper tied his horse, before the teams were unharnessed. Meanwhile three off men had chosen a spot by some bushes, where an iron bar was set on a pair of uprights five feet apart, and, before the sound of axes had ceased in the bush behind, three full kettles swung over a roaring fire. A bell-tent was pitched for the officer commanding; the horses were watered, groomed, and fed; then, at a merry call from the bugle, there was a general dash to the wagons for plates and cups, while knives were whipped from belt or boot-leg, ready for a general assault on fried bacon, hard biscuit, and scalding tea. After the meal there was a lively cross-fire of chaff, a cutting and burning of plug tobacco, and delicate gray smoke lifting towards the white stars which stole softly out of the twilight.

Presently the horses were hobbled, turned out with great clatter of chain-links, and ungainly leaps, to grass, and placed in charge of a relief of pickets who must watch by turns through the long silence of the

night. Blankets were spread along the saddle line, or in or under wagons. First Post was sounded, Last Post was sounded, and then the sweet notes of the Regimental Call went throbbing against the hills, crying to the stars:

"That's all, boys. Dream of the girls you've lost. Lights Out."

I think it was when the Great Bear stood on his head, when all the horses slept, and the slow dawn widened, that the dream-people came—mothers, sisters, lovers, the folk who wake in the night thinking of those they love, praying for their men. That is why the grass seemed all to be sparkling with little tears, when the young day shone on Eagle Creek, and the bugler roused us with sudden triumphant music of the reveillé.

We rolled our blankets, washed, loaded the wagons, tended the horses, breakfasted, harnessed, marched, and before the sun had looked down over the canyon wall, the riders were breasting the hillside, the transport groaning across the meadow.

When we came to the edge of the plain overlooking the Battle River, it was to camp among wild-flowers in a lusty wind, where we were safe from the con-

tagion of Fort Battleford. Thence daily we watched the funeral pageants creeping across the valley; or venturing, without leave, down to the fort, met ghostly white invalids, more or less insane, the veterans of D Troop. One of these, dressed for a burning summer day in buffalo coat and lavender kid gloves, wept to me about the number of such gloves which he could buy if only he could get his month's pay safely invested.

That night the poor beggar, breaking out of hospital, ran a couple of miles in his socks through the dewy grass, turned out a sleeping household, and complained to a brace of scared old maids that his feet were too cold for the journey. He died next day.

One of our fellows, passing a house by the fort, heard an altercation, and through the open window saw Mrs. Billy, who, finding her husband, the canteen man, drunk, had knocked him down "and put the boots to him." She was discovered jumping on his chest, sobbing her heart out the while with grief at his misconduct.

"Oh, Billy, and we might have such an 'appy 'ome!"

The officers were drinking, the troop was crazy,

and Dr. Miller, best loved of all men in the regiment, was seized with misgivings. He did not know if he had been quite sober while performing an operation, doubted if he was fit to live any longer, and went to his room. There he lay on his bed, put the muzzle of his carbine between his teeth, and touched the trigger with his great toe—but afterwards the men who came to clean the room found that, considerate to the end, this poor gentleman had spread sheets to make their task easy.

It was well that D Troop should be sent away to get back health and reason on a seven-hundred-mile march across the Plains.

They rode out past our camp very stiff and military, in full uniform, pink-and-white, like girls at a ball, uneasy under the stare of our hard men, with the band at their head, and a blaze of gold and scarlet.

As they passed, C Troop came rolling in from Macleod to take their place, romping on fat horses, glowing with health, bubbling over with wickedness, gorgeous in cowboy or Indian dress, woolly shaps, long-fringed deerskin shirts, red sashes, scalps taken in action; and one or two with their own squaws, horses, tepees—a retinue trailing astern of the pro-

cession. C sniffed, D blushed, F stared at that encounter, the most splendid pageant I have ever seen on the Frontier.

Our F Detachment now handed over the district, with custody of the Cree nation, to the relieving troop, and we rolled off across the Plains back to Prince Albert.

The wild fruit was ripe, the autumn fires, sweeping for hundreds of miles, covered the land with a blue veil of smoke, the poplars were changing to tremulous gold, the pools were freezing, when our troop struck camp for winter quarters in some old log-huts. Then the officer commanding had me into his drawing-room, where I sat on the edge of a chair, too nervous to remove my forage-cap. Was it quite honest, he asked gently, for me to take full pay for half service?

I did not care, so long as I might serve.

Was it quite wise, he suggested, to serve with an open wound draining away my strength?

I was never very wise. So the words were spoken, and by wagon and coach I was sent down to Regina. The last stage of the journey was by train in the middle of the night, and perhaps I was a little be-

wildered at having met again with linen sheets, tablecloths, pretty waitresses, on reaching the edge of civilization. The train, too, seemed to make a dreadful noise after the great silence in the North. The day-car was empty save for the sweet presence of an English gentlewoman, marvelously fair; sitting up all night because only rich people could afford the luxurious rear-end of the train. Humbly I ventured to offer her my rug, but she repulsed me, and I wanted to crawl away and die.

Then, with a mad recklessness, I dared to approach again, offering up a novel to amuse her loneliness, but a glance sent me flying, put to utter confusion. The smart cavalry uniform, which might have pleased the waitresses at Troy, branded me with this lady as a Tommy cast by art magic into the wilderness, who had no right to be frantic with love at first sight, or make audacious worship. Perhaps the maid was shy, but the boy was projecting a dramatic suicide when the train slowed down for Regina. So was my first love nipped by a pitiless frost, and I went with my sore heart to report at headquarters.

So the end came, and I sat very miserable on a bed while the Orderly Sergeant read General

Orders to men lying drowsy in the long barrack-room.

"Regimental Number 1107 Constable Pocock, having been invalided, is hereby struck off the strength of the Force."

As I sneaked out past the guard-house, a sentry challenged me:

"Halt! Who goes there?"

"A friend."

"Pass friend, all's well."

All's well! The bugles were crying to the night the long Last Post, the Plains reached away into immeasurable space, and I walked on through silence. The grass was starry with frost, the heavens one blaze of stars, but no lamp shone to guide me. Presently, standing on the trail, I heard the far-off bugles softly crying, clear through the dark, the Regimental Call, and two last long-drawn notes that said "Lights Out!"

And I turned again to my trail, with no lights to guide me.

VI

THE GREAT PATROL

BEFORE proceeding with the direct line of my story, let me tell how at a later day, having obtained permission from the dread Commissioner, I rode with the great patrol.

In the days following our campaign of 1885, when the Mounted Police numbered a thousand riders, a patrol was sent once a week which passed a letter westward, from outpost to outpost, District to District, until it had been carried from Manitoba to the Rocky Mountains.

The trail followed a ridge which separates the rivers for Hudson's Bay from the waters which flow south to the Gulf of Mexico. It ran midway between the United States boundary and the Canadian Pacific Railway, and the riders were able from the high ground to observe a vast scope of country, that they might watch for smugglers, horse-thieves, strayed cattle, or wandering Indians, make the game laws a

fact, or turn out the settlements to fight a prairie fire.

The Thousand-Mile Patrol consisted of one trooper, but if he had to sleep before he could reach a house, a second man attended with wagon or pack-horse to carry camp equipment. No lone rider is allowed out beyond a day's march, lest, meeting with some accident, he perish miserably upon the Plains before he has been missed. My old chum, Reddy Herron, was still spoken of in low tones in the days when I rode with the patrol. A capable man, well mounted, with food in his saddle-wallets, he had been sent out alone in the spring. The sun glare from the white drifts caught his eyes, and he went blind. He must have dismounted, they say, and the horse, frightened by his groping with outstretched arms, broke away, leaving him alone. He had his revolver left to him.

At a winter camp of cowboys less than a mile away his shot was heard when he fired, his teeth clenched on the muzzle. There was no other way.

Then there was Sergeant Parker, who got lost in winter somewhere on the Milk River Ridge, where a blizzard had wiped out the trail. For seven days he kept in the saddle, his brain chilled, his body warmed

by fever, his mind in exalted delirium seeing wonders and marvels beyond telling, until, with slow degeneration of the tissues, he sank at last to the ground in the deep sleep. The horse, badly swollen by the pressure of the girth, had made a living scratching out grass under the snow, and when his master fell remained beside him. He had scratched out a grass hole all round the man, leaving him perched on a sharp ridge of snow, when, looking up, he saw travelers in the distance. He ran to the sleigh, appealing with almost human entreaties until they followed him to his master's side. The man was saved.

If there is peril both in winter and summer for a lone rider, one goes with a quiet mind in company. Indeed, after a week at Regina, abed with pleurisy and ulcerated jaws, I was mighty glad to escape in the saddle to the open Plains. Maladies are sedentary demons which may sit on a man in bed, or track him when he ventures out on foot, but cannot overtake a decent horse.

We traveled slowly on the big patrol over Wood Mountain, the Cypress Hills, the Milk River Ridge, seven hundred miles between drinks, for there was not enough settlement on the way to support one

liquor dealer. We averaged thirty-four miles a day, with leisure for a sleep in the noon heat, a swim in the creeks, and long delicious evenings by our campfires. As for Mr. Blank, special correspondent, expected with displeasure by five Troops, the boys at the outposts would often ask me when that brute was coming, and who was he, anyway, to be granted a special patrol like a blooming Viceroy? I would describe that gentleman as far astern, delayed by his enormous obesity, a sluggish personage, peevish, stingy, important, useless, a burden on the trail, a nuisance to the detachments. I was only a buck Policeman, a man from the next Troop, on duty as the traveler's servant, living my boyhood again, taking the old delight in the old Frontier, but now with a clearer vision, an older head, a bigger heart, and broader sympathies.

Keep it a secret from the Government, don't tell the officers, that a young female came with us all the way, an unofficial person, far from respectable, most reprehensible indeed, an angel with iridescent pinions, weaving spells of magic, a spirit who changed this mere policeman's beat into a field of flowers fenced by the azure sky. She led the boys on duty, at home on the lone trail, delighting in their camps, making pets

of their horses, flavoring hard fare, mending broken hearts—and her dear name is Romance. The boys, bless 'em, were much too stupid to see even when her gay wings brushed their eyelids, but I saw.

No doubt I am quite crazy, who for years had seen the Western United States given over to robbery-under-arms, cheating and butchery of Indians, dueling, lynching, train-wrecking, dynamiting of blacklegs, and other cheerful and hearty forms of outdoor exercise—and here was a wilder country where men rode unarmed.

Were our Canadian frontiersmen of a milder type? Why, these fellows would ride all day for the Government, then all night for a bottle of whisky, and spent the whole of their leisure devising devilments, yet by the trickery of an oath and a uniform, Romance had created the frailest of them into perfect constables of the peace. So by her sly enchantments she inspires men just as frail to be magistrates, governors, priests, and kings; and my knees have given way before the official scrutiny of a Policeman who last night in his private capacity lay drunk. Considering the condition of the Western States, what else than witchcraft has saved our several British frontiers from total

anarchy? Only the subtle conjuring of Romance could have changed the untamable man into a constable, and put all the wolves on duty to guard the sheep.

"Don't you see her?" I cried.

"You're off your chump," said the wolves.

They rode to every house, asking the sheep if there were "any complaints." They had the powers of the Russian secret police, the right of search, authority to kill, and yet were welcome guests.

The settlers gravely consulted these impudent young devils on points of law, the mending of a churn, the baby's teething, the symptoms of appendicitis, and they never even grinned. At their detachments, a string of lonely log-houses, they gave free hospitality to all comers, relieved suffering travelers, set a matronly example in clean housekeeping, and they made impartial love to every girl they saw.

They never would take me quite seriously. One night I was rewarded for cooking a dish of curry with the gift of a photograph, and stern demands for praise. I observed that the hat was all right, the coat beautiful, and everything lovely if only the face were omitted. Whereat the donor let fly at me with

the curry, the joint, the loaf, and most of the furniture, then challenged me to a duel, the weapons to be cannon loaded with buffalo-horns, and finally lent me his horse for the next day, a compliment he would have denied his brother.

Another man allowed me to ride the Kelly gray, who had traveled six thousand miles in the previous year, which is a world's record. The next pet horse bucked me off before breakfast, and bolted five times afterwards, all for pure love of the sunshine. Afterwards in D Troop I had the famous 414, a superb charger who grabbed the seat of my breeches whenever I tried to mount, and for a fortnight greeted me of a morning by knocking off my hat. Him I took to Calgary, the first town he had seen in all his seventeen years. At the sight of a baby-carriage he went flat, all four legs a-straddle; and as to the main street he could only express his feelings by side jumps across the roadway, so large was every house, so apt to reach out and bite. The policemen who had four feet were naturally twice as merry as those who had only two.

I lack space for detail of our camps and marches as we crossed the Plains, and have no skill to describe

the ineffable majesty of that tawny field, with the blue sky above wherein the cloud-herds pasture. The most abandoned hell-rake becomes awed in time by the dread solemnity of that wilderness, so that the sunlight finds the springs of a hidden religion, and the waters of life sparkle at the discovery. For him who has eyes and ears the stones are crying out, the hills are speaking of History engraved upon the land, the story of the great Ice Age, the tale of the mammoth herds and their wild hunters, the romance of Indian times before there were any horses, and the scouts built cairns to guide their tribes from hill to hill for hundreds of miles along the watered routes. We were able to decipher, as we rode, the story of vast bison herds and their migrations, to find the circles of stones which weighted long-vanished tents, and read comedies on many a rock-face painted with advertisements of old Indian raids. Listen to the sorrowful story of the Seven Thieves.

A party of seven Blackfoot warriors had been into Montana stealing horses, and on their triumphant return stopped to depict their raid at the Writing-on-Stone beside Milk River. A lodge to represent their numbers, so many horses to show what a lot they

had stolen from the Gros Ventre nation, heads turned towards home, tails up to express contempt, then a few sketchy "suns" told of their days on the trail, and all men might read the story of what they had done. They advertised too much, they stayed too long, for their scalps are in the tepees of the Gros Ventres, their bones are neatly arranged on top of the rock, their souls—address the Happy Hunting Grounds.

To the blind there is only darkness, but to a man with eyes the prairie is alive with all sorts of little people in fur hair and feathers, from the absurd little owls who openly protest against passing horsemen, to the coyote wolf upon his moonlit hill, bewailing the infrequency of supper.

The trail itself may be read like an open book, inscribed with a record in the dust of the men who have passed since the last rain—Indians, Police, cowboys, pioneers. As we rode we were always reading the signs, and after we laid down our blankets under the stars we would talk sometimes, wondering if we, the forerunners, would be remembered when the trails had enlarged into roads, and given place to steel rails. We knew that the worst lands upon these plains had

been tested, and given forty bushels of wheat to the acre. The wheatfields are spreading from the east, and when they cover the prairies our Great Lone Land will be a thing of history. Our outposts by the Moose Pound, and Battle Creek, and Many Berries, Pend Oreille, the Writing-on-Stone, Whoopup, Standoff, Slideout, the Leavings, will all be cities then, our Districts sovereign states, and a nation of forty million people will send their senators to represent the Plains at Westminster.

The patrol was nearing the end of the field, and already its fence, the Rocky Mountains, had lifted above the sky-line like a throng of white angels kneeling upon the edge of the world. Porthos was driving the wagon, while Athos and I scouted to find him a route through chaos. "A man," said Athos, "who trots on ground like this deserves to be killed. Look at the badger holes! Remember Monty? Thrown, and the horn of the saddle went through his stomach. It's sure death to lope. *Tchik!*" and away we went at full gallop.

We camped that night in Lonely Valley, and woke early because of the frost, grubbing like badgers to get deeper down into the warmth. Then I felt more

blankets thrown on my shivering body, and two sleeps are better than one. I had barely rolled over and changed dreams when Porthos yelled:

"Grub pile! Show a leg there, you fellows! here's breakfast getting cold, and I've been shivering myself into a beastly sweat!"

I met d'Artagnan a few days later. Once he and I sat on a log beside a cabin, when a man came up to talk on a plunging horse. The animal backed at us and lashed out at the log wall, at which I moved, but d'Artagnan, rather amused, sat with a grave smile kicking back at the horse until the brute took to flight.

Such are the D Troop riders, but the teamsters are, perhaps, the mightest drivers in North America. The Earl and Countess of Aberdeen, on their viceregal tour, were in the charge of a D Troop teamster, and got stuck in a river because the near wheeler, a fool mare, lay down to drown herself. Passing the reins to the Viceroy, the teamster swam round that mare, trying to rouse her, but she was unconscious, and the flood had nearly overturned the wagon. Then the teamster climbed in his seat for a better purchase, and made his three remaining horses drag the drowned

mare, wagon and all, right through the swimming and up the bank to safety.

When the big patrol had come to an end at Fort Macleod, I set out again on a five-hundred-mile scamper around the flanks of the Rockies, still being a guest of the regiment, and busy threading together the story of a tragedy which was then in all men's minds. Here is the story:

Dawn was breaking of a summer's day in 1896, when Green-Grass-growing-in-the-Water, a Red Indian scout, came trotting into Fort Macleod with a dispatch from Standoff for Superintendent Steele. He brought news that the body of a Blood warrior, Medicine-Pipe-Stem, shot through the skull, and three weeks dead, had been found in an empty cabin.

The Blood tribe knew how Bad-Young-Man, familiar to the whites as Charcoal, had three weeks since come home from a hunting trip, to his little cabin, where his wife, the Marmot, lived. He had found his wife in the arms of Medicine-Pipe-Stem, and by his warrior's right to defend his own honor had shot the intruder down. Charcoal had done justice, and the tribe was ready to take his part, what-

ever the Agent might say, or the Mounted Police might do for the white man's law.

A week had passed of close inquiry, when one of the scouts rode up to the ration house where the people were drawing their supplies of beef, and gave warning that Charcoal was betrayed to the Mounted Police.

Charcoal demanded the name of his betrayer, and learned that Mr. Wilson, the Agent, was his enemy. That evening Charcoal waited outside the Agent's house, watching the lighted windows, where on the yellow blinds there were passing shadows cast by the lamp within as various members of the household went about their business. At last he saw Mr. Wilson's shadow on the blind, fired, and shot the Agent through the thigh. The household covered their lamps, closed the shutters, sent for help, and hid the wounded man on a couch behind the front door, well out of range from the windows. Next morning in broad daylight Charcoal went up to the house with a rifle to finish Wilson, walked in, and looked about him, but failed to discover his victim behind the open door. He turned away and rode for the hills, and the Mounted Police, turned out for the pursuit, were misled by a hundred rumors.

D Troop at the time numbered one hundred and seventy men, led by Colonel S. B. Steele, the most distinguished of all Canadian frontiersmen. After he had posted men to guard all passes through the Rocky Mountains, he had a district about ninety miles square, combed over incessantly by strong patrols, so that Charcoal's escape seemed nearly impossible. The district, however, was one of foothills, bush, winding gorges, tracts of bowlders, and to the eastward prairie, where the whole Blood and Piegan tribes were using every subtlety of Indian craft to hide the fugitive.

Inspector Jervis with twenty Police and some scouts had been seventy hours in the saddle, and camped at Big Bend exhausted, when a rider came flying in reporting Charcoal as seen at Kootenai. The white men rallied for the twenty-eight-mile march, but the Indians lay and were kicked, done for, refusing to move. The white men scrambled to their saddles, and reeled off upon the trail, unconquerable.

One day a Mormon settler brought news to Mr. Jervis, for while cutting fence-rails he had seen Charcoal creep out from the bush and make off with his coat. So this Mormon led them to a little meadow where they found and surrounded a tent. Then Mr.

Jervis took two men and pulled aside the door, while they covered the place with their revolvers. Two Mormons were brought out, shaking with fright, from the tent.

Further on in the gray dawn they came to another clearing, and a second tent, which they surrounded. Some noise disturbed the Marmot, who crept sleepy to the door, looked out, then with a scream warned her husband. Charcoal slashed with his knife through the back of the tent, crept into the bush, and thence fired, his bullet knocking the cap from the officer's head; but a volley failed to reach him. The tent was Charcoal's winter quarters, stored with a carcass of beef, five sacks of flour, bacon, sugar, and deerskin for his shoes, and there the Marmot was taken, with a grown daughter, and a little son called Running-Bear, aged eight.

So far in many weeks of the hunt Charcoal had his loyal wife to ride with him, and they used to follow the Police patrols in order to be sure of rest when the pursuers camped. Two Police horses, left half dead, were taken up and ridden by this couple an extra forty miles. An officer and a buck were feeding at Boundary Creek Detachment when Mr. and Mrs.

Charcoal stole their chargers out of the stable. But now Charcoal had to face the awful prospect of a lone fight, and with the loss of his family fell into blind despair. Then all his kinsfolk were arrested, to the number of thirty-seven, and lodged in prison.

Since his raid on the horses at Boundary Creek, all Police Stables were locked, and visited frequently at night. Corporal Armour, at Lee's Creek, came out swinging his lantern, sniffing at the night, bound for the stable, when he saw a sudden blaze revealing an Indian face behind the horse trough, while a bullet whisked through his sleeve. He bolted for the house, grabbed his gun, and returned only to hear a horse galloping away into the night. Charcoal for once had failed to get a remount, and was grieved at having fired upon a man he greatly liked. Always there was that feeling, for the warriors of the Blackfoot nation have learned to like the Police, to reverence their justice, and some of the older non-commissioned officers are almost worshiped.

Wilde, for instance, was universally loved by the tribes. The same feeling caused his old regiment, the Blues, at Windsor, to beg for Black Prince, his charger, after his death, and sent the whole body of

the Northwest Mounted Police into mourning when he fell.

Tradition made him a great aristocrat under an assumed name, and I remember well how we recruits in the olden times were impressed by his unusual physical beauty, his stature, horsemanship, and singular personal distinction. Constable Ambrose attended him when he rode out for the last time on Black Prince, followed by an interpreter and a body of Indian scouts. They were in deep snow on a plain where there stands a line of bowlders, gigantic rocks, the subject of weird legends among the tribes. Far off against the sky an Indian was seen riding fast, who swerved at the sight of the pursuit, and was recognised for Charcoal. Wilde ordered Ambrose to gallop the twenty miles to Pincher Creek, turn the people out in the Queen's name, send a dispatch to Macleod, and return at once. The Indians tried for Charcoal at long range, but their new rifles were clogged with factory grease, hard frozen, so that the pin failed of its impact, and they all missed fire. Wilde's great horse was drawing ahead of the ponies, and he called back:

"Don't fire, or you'll hit me by mistake."

As he overtook Charcoal he drew his revolver, the orders being to fire at sight, then laid the weapon before him, wanting, for the sake of a great tradition, to make the usual arrest, the taking of live outlaws by hand. Charcoal's rifle lay across the saddle, and he held the reins Indian fashion with the right hand, but when Wilde grabbed at his shoulder he swerved, touching the trigger with his left. The bullet went through Wilde's body, then, deflecting on the bone of the right arm, traversed the forearm, came out of the palm, and dropped into his gauntlet, where it was found.

Wilde rolled slowly from the saddle, while Black Prince went on, and Charcoal also; but then the outlaw turned, galloped back, and fired straight downwards into the dying man. Black Prince had stopped at a little distance, snorting, and when the Indian came grabbing at his loose rein, he struck with his forefeet in rage at his master's murderer. Charcoal had fired to disable Wilde as the only way left him of escaping "slavery"; now he had to conquer the dead man's horse to make his escape from the trackers.

Some three weeks ago Charcoal's brothers, Left Hand and Bear Paw, had been released from jail with

the offer of two hundred dollars from the Government, and fifty dollars from the officer commanding, if they could capture the outlaw. The tribes had decided that Charcoal's body belonged of right to the Police, and after Wilde's death he could expect no mercy on earth, no help or succor from any living man. From the slaying, like a wounded beast to his lair, he rode direct for home, came to the little cabin, tied Black Prince to a bush, and staggered towards the door. Out from the house came Left Hand, who ran towards him, while the outlaw, moved by some brute instinct, fled for the horse. But Left Hand, overtaking his brother, threw his arms about him, kissing him upon both cheeks, and Bear Paw, following, cast his rope over the helpless man, throwing him down a prisoner. The brothers carried Charcoal into the cabin, pitched him down in a corner, then Left Hand rode for the Police, while Bear Paw stayed on guard.

It was Sergeant Macleod who came first to the cabin where Bear Paw squatted waiting, and Charcoal lay, to all appearance dead, in a pool of blood upon the earthen floor. He had found a cobbler's awl, used in mending skin shoes, and opened the arteries of his arm, that he might take refuge from treachery in

death. From ankle to groin his legs were skinned with incessant riding, and never again was he able to stand upon his feet.

For four months Charcoal had been hunted as an enemy by D Troop, now for a like time he was nursed in the guard-room at Fort Macleod, and though he lay chained to the floor in mortal pain, his brothers of the guard did their best. As he had been terrible in the field, so this poor hero was brave in suffering, humble, and of so sweet a disposition that he won all men's hearts. Once he choked himself with a blanket, once poisoned himself with a month's collection of cigarette stubs, each time nearly achieving his purpose, but he never flinched, never gave utterance even to a sigh, except for the moaning in his sleep.

At the trial his counsel called no witnesses, but read the man's own defense, a document so sad, so wonderfully beautiful in expression, that the court appealed to the Crown for mercy, where mercy had become impossible.

When he was taken out to die, the Troop was on guard surrounding the barracks, the whole of the tribes being assembled outside the fence. The prisoner sat in a wagon, face to face with the executioner,

who wore a mask of black silk, and beside him was the priest. Charcoal began to sing his death-song.

"Stay," said the priest; "make no cry. You're far too brave a man for that." The song ceased, and Charcoal died as he had lived.

VII

THE TRAIL OF THE JOURNALIST

AS a reward for getting frozen the Canadian Government gave me a liberal pension, and a berth in the Civil Service; but some months of rest at home, followed by a year of work at Ottawa, brought on my old complaint—a longing for trouble. My wound was now healed; I had published a scandalously bad volume of stories and lyrics; and, as a candle draws a moth, the Frontier was calling me back. Some fool has noticed that a rolling stone gathers no moss. Why should it? I have never observed any moss on stones of value, or seen a mossy stone which was not rotten.

With not a single regret I turned my back once more on civilization, preferring the ways and trails of the Lost Legion. At the mature age of twenty-two one takes one's self in deadly earnest, and I had some vague idea of riding along the Rocky Mountains from Canada to the City of Mexico. In that

I succeeded long years afterwards, but for the time, having no money, I planned to earn my living on the way. So, proceeding by rail to British Columbia, I alighted at Kamloops, where I rigged myself out as a peddler, and traded with an Indian for a horse. In the innocence of my young heart I paid a Winchester rifle, a suit of clothes, and ten dollars, getting in exchange a beautiful buckskin gelding, famous—I found out all that afterwards—as a man-slayer. He tried to kill me twice before I started, but that was only by way of experiment, and he reserved the subtleties of his business until we reached the summit of a mountain-pass some sixteen miles from town. I had a dim misgiving as to the *cincha* (girth), and got off to see; when, filling his barrel with wind, he marked my cinching with an evil eye. As I mounted he broke off at a full gallop down a pile of rocks, drew in his ribs, and bucked off the saddle. I remember seeing my right arm break at the elbow, and trail off at right angles on the rocks, but felt nothing whatever. My horse got snarled up in the coils of the picket rope, so had to wait in a field vert, semé with babies' bibs, cigars, mouth-organs, and patent medicines, until I woke up and attended to him. We had an argument

then which lasted twenty minutes, while the day faded, and a storm breathed violet lightning in the west.

Using my left hand, I cut the rope, cleared the horse, and made fast again to the neck-loop, ready to lead; all of which he observed with an evil smile. Then he ran in circles, coiling the slack of the rope thrice round my legs, before I saw his game and jumped clear. At that he started off in the dead run, drawing the full length of the rope through my left hand because I refused to let go; he spoiled my left hand.

Since there was no special reason for remaining in a field sprinkled with babies' bibs and mouth-organs, I set off down the road in search of a ranch. On one side went an arm which weighed like a hundred-ton gun, on the other side a hand leaving plentiful tracks of blood; and in my head the multiplication table mixed up with the Rule of the Road at Sea and the Church Catechism. After the end of the catechism, I came to an optical illusion which looked like a small tent by the wayside. It was a tent, and out of it I hoisted a Swedish road repairer. To him I talked monotonously, telling him things to keep my brain at work, while he—objecting still—led me down a corkscrew trail which I mistook for the back of a

rattlesnake. A mile or so down, at the tip of its tail, there were barking dogs. I remember a front door, and a room with a large table which got in the way while I walked round it with clattering spurs. Then I dropped, and that was the end of the expedition to Mexico.

Some two months afterwards I was lying in hospital at Kamloops, of little use to myself or anyone else, when news came of war on the Skeena, and up went my tail. Somebody wrote me out a telegram, and the answer came at once from a Montreal paper: "Yes; to the extent of a hundred dollars."

Mightily pleased at being a War Correspondent, even to the extent of a hundred dollars, I inquired my way to the Skeena; but nobody knew where the place was, until an old map was dug up which had it marked in dotted lines as a river about a thousand miles to the northward. So I took train to the Pacific Coast, and at Victoria found a steamer going northward. She was called the *Cariboo Fly*, and there never was a grimier little vagrant. She dreamed her days away in the exquisite channels, camped every night in some lovely bay, or, when we were bored, gave us a birthday party.

On Sunday, while we waited for a tide, sailors and passengers, firemen, officers and all, landed for a picnic in the forest. There mighty pines shot up three hundred feet from the mysterious twilight of the aisles. The deer came sniffing curiously, canaries fluttered round us, and humming-birds flashed by like living gems. Sheer from the headlands, down through clear emerald sea, one saw the seaweed forests; and the *Cariboo Fly*, which was never known to hurry, seemed afloat in translucent space rather than water.

Then through the summer days we lay on deck, broaching cases of fruit from the cargo, and saved ripe peaches from lapsing to moldy pulp. Why, little puppies might ripen to old dogs for all the *Fly* cared, so long as she were not bustled!

Whales by the score were feasting on cuttlefish in the sounds, and the young whales playing about them would try to blow tall fountains of spray like their sires. A great white-tipped eagle resting on the air, gulls and innumerable sea-fowl, porpoises making game of our sloth with pretended racing—always some blithe wild life attended us. In the narrower channels the *Fly*, with frantic spurt and shrieking whistle, would vainly pursue the reindeer as they swam

from isle to isle. And at night in the waters beneath, revealed in blue-white clouds of phosphorescence, we saw the dog-fish, those were-wolves of the sea—at their ghastly dances.

And nothing worried us as the *Fly* drifted casually through that majestic Archipelago, to leave decayed fruit at some forlorn trading post, sheet tin at the salmon canneries on lonely fjords, or trifling parcels with a waiting skiff.

We threaded abysmal chasms, where cataracts leaped white from the mountain-tops, to be lost in a belt of clouds, and roll gray to the tide beneath. And so through sheets of rain into the grim jaws of the Skeena Inlet, and landed among the stinks of Spukshuat.

In a region so steeply walled that there are very few landing-places except for goats, and where missions and salmon canneries get wiped out by occasional avalanches, Spukshuat had just enough space to be a quagmire. That is why the people, stray whites, half-breeds, and many Indians, were full of sinful pride, and, though there was only a trading post and a cannery, the place had two names, assuming the style of Port Essington. A battery of Canadian

Artillery was in camp close by, unable to reach the seat of war up the Skeena; firstly because there was no war, and secondly because the only possible transport was by dugout canoes unable to carry guns.

A hundred and fifty miles up the Skeena River dwelt an Indian nation called the Gaetkshian, who had never heard of the Canadian Government. They observed that the whites—there were twenty-five in a region as big as Germany—were only a small tribe, with a taste for preaching and shop-keeping. They believed in the Hudson's Bay Company.

Now the Company had a house called Hazelton at the Forks of the Skeena, and the gentleman in charge took to evil courses. He sold measles to the Gaetkshians, mixed up with his brown sugar, of which two hundred and forty people died. No white people died. I have this on the authority of the native doctors, who knew about it, and advised their laity, just by way of reasonable precaution, to massacre all the whites.

Of course the whites are accustomed to that sort of thing, and in savage countries would get quite uneasy if they heard no rumors of their impending massacre. They would think there must be some

plot. But then came the lamentable tragedy of Gaetwinlthgul Jim. He was an extremely nice man, with a shrew to wife. They had two little children who tramped with them long days through the sopping snow, attended a fever-stricken debauch in their wet clothes, and died of measles. Jim had no grudge against the whites, but Mrs. Jim happened to be the heiress of Nealth, the family doctor. Jim went and shot the doctor.

After this proper and reasonable act, Jim paid off the doctor's relations—came down very handsomely with a copper shield charged with the tribal arms, a bale of blankets, and some guns, all of which he pitched down a hill to quench the grief of the mourners. The mourners were comforted.

But then he was annoyed by the needless interference of five white constables sent nearly eight hundred miles to arrest him. He and Mrs. Jim fortified themselves in a house at the hill village of Gaetwinlthgul, declared war against the whites, and threatened death to all who molested their peace. They had fulfilled the law, the real tribal law.

All might still have gone well but for two things: the shrew would worry Jim, and the Indian agent on

the coast sent him a letter advising surrender. He could not read the letter, nobody could, but it seemed to be some sort of passport. So to get away from being nagged, Jim went off peaceably and made love to a lively widow down at Gaetwangak on the river. There he was captured by a constable, and naturally thought there must be some mistake. He bolted, and the white man shot him.

Of course the whole nation was furious at this outrage; moreover, the Gaetkshians and the neighboring Nishgars numbered a thousand rifles, all good shots. They demonstrated, and twenty-seven special constables in a mortal funk came up the river to build a fort of refuge at Hazleton. Then the Indians were horrified. What did it mean? Were the whites going to break out? Happily Captain Fitz-Stubbs, whom they all knew and liked, came up the river just then, alone, unarmed, and told the Indians not to make fools of themselves. A battery of artillery was down at the river mouth, and a warship lay in the tide which could eat them all at one gulp. They promised to be good until these clouds rolled by, but next winter they would play the very deuce. Jim had been murdered by the whites, and his tribe was bound to avenge

him at the scene of the crime at Gaetwangak on the river. They were going to kill a missionary, and would await the return of the incumbent of Gaetwangak.

Now the missionary incumbent of Gaetwangak was newly married, and did not want his wife to be a widow, so he very wisely accepted another parish. The Synod of the Missions scratched their ears, and prayed for a nice young *locum tenens* to winter at Gaetwangak. The laity of the coast were all very secular both in manners and conversation, neither would it do to import any unwary young tenderfoot from Home. Something was wanted for an incumbent not liable to overexcite the parish by getting martyred. I wanted, for my editor, to get an accurate report of the Skeena troubles. The Synod appointed me to Gaetwangak.

Meanwhile I was not expected there until November, so Jim's friends and relations had to exercise the Christian grace of patience. I was down at the mouth of the river, cloyed with the fragrance of Spukshuat, but having a lovely time with C Battery. We borrowed a steam-launch, explored an uncharted fjord, and discovered an enormous cataract which came down

from a navigable river. Where that river came from nobody knew, but it was as big as the Thames at Oxford.

Like a sitting hen with no eggs is a war correspondent restive without any war to distort. And my editor had suggested that, being in the neighborhood, I might just as well report on the Behring Sea Question. I was no more bothered than he by trifling points of geography. Behring Sea was only two thousand miles distant, and I still had fifty bright dollars, enough for a gorgeous autumn on lines of the strictest economy. I set out by canoe for Alaska.

The dugout canoe of the northern tribes is no clumsy log scooped hollow. It is indeed hewn from the trunk of a giant cedar, but the shell is less than an inch in thickness. When the hull is finished it is filled with water, and the water boiled by throwing in red-hot stones. The beams being set in position, the gunwale shrinks against them in cooling, and the lofty carved prow and stern-piece complete lines of most delicate beauty. The usual size is that of a Venetian gondola, with a beam of five and a half feet, a length of thirty feet, a ballast of three tons, and a

crew of five men. The steering is done with a large oar, and two pole-masts are carried with trysails, schooner-fashion.

A family of the Hydah tribe took me to sea as a passenger, and their vessel, winged out, running on the swell of the open Pacific, was the loveliest sea-creature I have ever known. Making the Alaskan coast, we threaded a maze of channels, camping in little bays, where we feasted on fresh venison,—like rubber tires boiled,—on freshly speared salmon, seaweed salads, clams, mussels, and ripe wild fruit, all cleanly cooked and served by the women round a blazing fire. After these evening banquets we would go on by starlight, gliding in phosphorescent seas of pale-blue flame, until we reached our camp-ground for the night.

These Hydahs of the Queen Charlotte Islands were nearly white, and one of the men in other clothes might readily have passed for an English sailor. In old times the tribe were Vikings, masters of the coast, a slave-holding aristocracy, skilled not only in canoe- and house-building, but in sculpture, heraldry, and other arts which they may have learned from Japanese castaways. Their carvings have been

mistaken for native work in Japan. Let me tell just one of their legends.

A man went away to the hunting up Masset Inlet, and left his young wife in the house alone. While he was away she bore a child to him. And when he came back by night, he stole into the dark house, creeping softly to where she lay, lest he disturb her in her sleep. He bent over her, looking down tenderly in her face, then in horror drew back. Another head was nestled at her breast, he heard soft breathing in response to hers, and felt the warmth from someone else in the bed. Mad with anguish, he lifted up her hand, the hand which he had taken to caress, and bit it to the bone. She woke with a great cry, raised herself on her knees, then to her feet, and held the child before her, held it up to him. Why had he come, she asked, like a dog to bite her while she lay nestling the child in its first sleep? He muttered out his doubts, his jealousy, his penitence, his love, and then she understood.

She towered above him now, asked how he dared insult her with his doubts, cursed him, cursed him in the name of the Raven, and by the Terrors of the Sea, made him a laughing-stock from generation to

generation forever; called on Him, the Raven, the Omnipotent Creator, bade Him strike down, strike this man, strike him and kill.

Then the Raven struck the man and made him to be a laughing-stock forever, and turned him into a stone by the rising tide upon the shore. But the woman with her child ran down into the sea.

The people go along the shore deriding this man who is turned to a stone, the craven who doubted, and is a laughing-stock forever.

The waters of the rising tide lap the cold stone, with broken-hearted murmuring, sorrow over him, ever troubled, never resting, ever forgiving, chiding in the measure of her sorrow, from generation unto generation.

My voyage with the Hydahs ended at last at the village founded by Mr. Duncan, a well-known missionary, who arranged that I should be neither fed nor sheltered lest I corrupt the morals of his converts. I insulted him most heartily in return, and took my leave in a flat-bottomed boat with two Indians, just as a big storm broke. Now these canoe Indians hate a boat, and when we got into bad water—my fault, of course—they became discouraged—white man's busi-

ness, not theirs. So I woke from my beauty sleep to find both men lying helpless upon their oars, while half-swamped we drifted through total darkness to destruction. "Would they be graciously pleased to pull?" "No," they said; "since we've got to die anyway, why bother?" With my boot I rebuked them both, and when I had kicked them into a different mind they began to cheer up. Still we were all nearly drowned, and wholly exhausted, before, at the break of day, we found more sheltered water in Tongass Narrows.

There is a cannery at the Narrows, where I waited a week for a steamer, and in the estuary of a creek near by saw a run of the hump-backed salmon. To reach fresh water they had to climb a cascade, at the top of which it was easy to take the fish by hand, grabbing behind the gills. Crowded into the approach to the cascade there were many thousands waiting their turn for the jump, and because of the dogfish attending in their rear they were closely packed. I tried to row a dory through that place, but could get neither my oars into the water nor the boat over the backs of the fish, while, attempting to break away on either side, the creatures splashed me wet with

the lash of their dorsal fins. My host would gaff a dozen every morning to select one fish for his dinner. A seine towed into the beach and made fast to a couple of trees dried out with the ebb, and was estimated to contain two thousand five hundred hump-backed salmon, with large numbers of the better varieties. The bulk of them were left to rot, and the stench of the whole place was beyond endurance.

From thence I was liberated by an American tourist steamer, five of whose glittering officers answered to the title of Captain, while the personage in supreme command held the rank of Commodore. My fellow-passengers in the steerage consisted of gold-miners, Chinamen, Indians, Kanakas, a grizzly bear, and a steam-winch based within six inches of my nose as I lay in a bunk like a hat-rack. That winch worked usually all night, and our first séance was further enlivened by the lamentations of the bear, and the wailing of an Indian dame who had lost her purse. "He stole my money! He go to jail at Junean, you bet your gum boots! He stole my money!" Her chant only ended with the dawn, when she found the money in her pocket.

The tourists, dull dogs all, were writing books of

travel, and the air flickered with their snapshot photography, but not a soul of them stayed on deck while we battered our way through pack ice into the heart of the alps of St. Elias, and watched the embattled precipice of the Muir Glacier launch crashing bergs in thunder through white surf. They spat and talked dollars after their kind, while down in the under-world of the steerage the Chinese coolies jabbered, the drunken Indian women shrieked like witches, and the poor old bear moaned over bones in a corner.

After ten days of wonders and marvels I was glad to escape the clatter, dirt, and flashy vulgarity of that perfumed menagerie. I landed at Fort Tongass, and paid my last five dollars to an elderly Indian lady for a passage by canoe to Fort Simpson in British Columbia. I had the honor of pulling the canoe myself, while the lady squatted in the stern-sheets making violent love to a young man whom she had bought for her husband.

From Fort Simpson the Hudson's Bay Company gave me by courtesy a passage in one of their canoes to Metlacahtla. On my arrival the Indian crew attempted to levy blackmail, so having led them to the magistrate's house, I doubled back and got my bag-

gage secured. Then with the magistrate's aid I made the Indians a "strong paper," which they readily accepted instead of cash. It read as follows: "Dear L——, these fellows tried blackmailing, kindly give them Hell with my compliments, yours sincerely."

Stony broke, greatly refreshed, and in a peaceful mood, I had now to report myself to the Diocesan Synod of New Caledonia, as ready to proceed to the Skeena and be a missionary among the unoffending heathen. To my horror I was ordered to show my paces by preaching in the cathedral (unconsecrated). To preach a sermon!

I have been in many a deadly peril, but my blood never ran so icy cold with fright as when I mounted the steps of the pulpit. I remembered that I had been a trooper, had acquired more than ordinary cheek, and gave twenty minutes of offense to a congregation of serious Christian Indians. I told them that the wages of sin is death, that the sin may consist of dirt surrounding a salmon cannery, and that the death takes the shape of pestilence. They concluded I was no Christian.

Five men of my congregation had an ample vengeance when, a few days later, I set off with them

for the mouth of the Skeena River. If their views conflicted with mine, the canoe, said they, was "Hudson's Bay Company," I was only a passenger, and not even a Christian, anyway, so I'd better shut up. I did. We reached the Skeena Inlet, and for the next ten days ensuing climbed up a long slope of river with "riffles" at every bend. Sailing, poling, paddling, rowing, tracking, we fought that torrent daily from dawn to night. At every vicious rapid the helmsman would mention, in broken English, canoes upset there and strong swimmers drowned.

Wet, shivering, lonesome, forced to sit in dignity lest I show my incompetence as a canoe-man, nearly addled with fright, I had but one idea left—to hide my alarm. So in the desperate passage of a white sluice I would revile the Indians for splashing me. My rude words they understood, and merely deplored them; but if ever a white man showed funk in danger, why, what was the use of all his doctrines! They never found me out, but thought I was a rummy variant from the usual type of parson. I doubt if it ever quite stopped raining, but we did not always roost in the drenched open on a bank of bowlders. Usually the fire was built among big pines, with a

sail for our shelter set up on poles in front, and the cooking was always perfect. After supper, wet to the skin, and tired out, these young athletes sang hymns with accuracy and power, the words all gone funny, but the melody ringing gloriously clear. Their one vice was a mania for prayer-meetings; and sometimes, dawdling by the way in the smoke shed of a native family under the maggot-dripping, putrid-drying salmon cured for the winter's food, I would lapse to open revolt against the unbounded loquacity of their supplications. Then they knew I was no good. They gave me an awful character to their chums of the up-river tribes.

At last, passing by my station at Gaetwangak, we came to Hazelton in the Forks of Skeena, where I completed my outfitting at the Hudson's Bay House. Seven gold-miners from the far-away Omenica were wintering here in civilization, still removed by seven hundred and fifty miles of impenetrable, almost unknown, wilderness from the nearest white man's town. The last belated canoes were leaving for the sea, and thereafter for six months we would only hear once from the outer world—when the Hudson's Bay Company's carrier came in on snowshoes, loaded with the

midwinter mail. One day when we were sitting in the store, all thinking hard while the Hudson's Bay man worked at his accounts, I hazarded a question:

"How much does it cost to winter?"

"Two hundred dollars," said one miner.

"Two-fifty," corrected another.

Then the Company's man looked up from his ledger. "All you've got," he chuckled; and the proposition was carried unanimously.

That evening, after dinner at the Mission House, one of these gentlemen came to the door and, standing outside, nervously reminded my hostess of her remark last year that nuggets should make lovely jewelry. "I thought you might fancy these," he ventured, presenting her with three ingots of gold, "for a brooch and earrings." So women are worshiped on the Frontier.

I was near the thin end of my credit when, with six months' provisions in a canoe, I went down to live at my station, thirty winding miles below the Forks. It was clear after the first snow, and now that the clouds were gone I saw the river was but a little channel lost among the foundations of tremendous ice-clad mountains. Twelve miles below Gaetwangak

lived an independent missionary with his household; elsewhere, except at the Forks, there were no white people, and the surrounding regions were marked on the maps "unexplored."

Someone had been a coward before me at Gaetwangak, either afraid of pagan influence on his converts, or scared for his very life, because the Mission was built two miles upstream from the village. It was a comfort to know I was not the only person scared, but surely I had little to rely on in the credulous young quarter-breed who served as my acting interpreter for the first few weeks. He made rare fun for the heathen, swallowing all that was told him of our impending death, and with red-hot imagination enlarged their tales to me. So it was in miserable apprehension that I daily raided the village to tend the sick, and round up my children for school. I buried my revolver, and went unarmed; for indeed it is beneath the white man's dignity to carry a weapon as though he were frightened of attack. Besides, I am a hopelessly bad shot.

Now Captain Fitz-Stubbs, as magistrate, had been ordered to visit the tribes, making proclamation of the British Peace *vice* the Indian Law demised. Last

of all he came to my village, camped at the schoolhouse, arranged for a council, and sent an old woman with a note inviting me to attend. He had just engaged a new interpreter, a vociferous expert at praying. This ingenious person came to tell us that the tribe was waiting in the Chief's house. He had just learned that Fitz-Stubbs and I were to be killed, so he reported everything all right.

We found the tribe assembled in one of the great cedar houses, a broad low-pitched barn proportioned like a Greek temple, and fronted by a mast sculptured from base to summit with the heraldic records of the family. In the middle of the house, under the smoke vent, burned a ceremonial fire of piled-up logs, but the light of the flames fell far short of the shadowy walls, and was only fitfully gleaming on the mighty blackened rafters overhead. As our eyes widened to the gloom, we could see the ruddy bronzed faces of the people as they sat motionless, impassive, about two hundred and fifty in number, round a big circle. Behind a fire a chair and table were set in the Chief's place, and there the magistrate sat down, his interpreter standing beside him. A soap box was placed for me in front of the people on his right.

Captain Fitz-Stubbs spoke cheerfully about the recent troubles, the frequent killing of men in the valley, the stupidness of blood feuds, and the strength of the white man's government, which now commanded their obedience on pain of inevitable punishment.

The Chief, Gillawa, responded, a young, powerful, manly chap, frankly contemptuous. The Indian law was good, he said, had lasted as long as the mountains. The white man's law was new, and weaker than a baby. Let the white man go to the salt water, and take his law with him.

The people were silent, the flame-light flickered redly on their eyes. Their turn was come, two white men were to die on the very scene where Gaetwinlthgul Jim had been murdered. Still there was much talking by subchiefs and councilors. At last a young man rose, who spoke at length, crouched down, creeping ever nearer to the magistrate, brandishing a long knife with many a forward thrust of the fire-lit blade, shouting, gesticulating, working up his fury for the death stroke.

I was crouched like a cat, strung for the rush to join Fitz-Stubbs, but still pretending to be at ease.

He knew that on his coolness depended the lives of all our people in the valley—the women, the children.

"Why don't you strike?" he said to the man with the knife. "I'm an old man, my beard is white, I haven't long to live; I am unarmed, at your mercy—you bloody coward, you're afraid to strike!"

The Indian lowered the knife, collapsed into vague threatenings, and was silent.

When at last we white men strolled out of the house into the fresh keen dusk: "That's all right," said Fitz-Stubbs.

He ordered his men to the canoe. "Well," he said, as we shook hands, "good-by. See you next month at the Forks? All right, we'll have a smoke then. So long!"

And he left me, this man with the white man's courage which I had still to learn.

Massacres at Nootka, Murderer's Bar, and Smith Inlet, the then recent slaughter and burning of the *Seabird's* crew, and many another tragedy of that region, had taught the whites to be canny with these people. The Skeena is not without its memories. In 1866, before the success of the Atlantic cable, an overland telegraph was planned from New York to St.

Petersburg by way of Behring Strait. From the Fraser to the Skeena the line was finished, and in 1898 I found the old trail still cumbered with fallen wire. The line itself was too mysterious a thing for any savage to fool with, but a fort was built to guard the stores at the Skeena terminal, and a man was left on guard through the winter months. Over a thousand miles of that iron thread, the lonely operator would talk with his chum on the Fraser; and when the Kispyox tribe attacked his block-house, the messages became of acutest interest. For six months the fort was held, but at last, by aid of an Indian girl, the garrison escaped by night in a canoe. Looking back, he saw the block-house burst into flames.

Once, Mr. Hankin, the trader, was coming up the river in a canoe, and his Indians landing at Kitzegucla set fire to the village by accident. On the trader's return the Kitzeguclas hauled him out of his canoe, and bade him prepare for death.

"With pleasure," said he, "but will you first oblige by standing aside. I really must write a line to Mrs. Hankin or she will be getting quite anxious."

While he wrote, and he did not hurry, the tribe cooled off. To the savage mind there is something

mysterious and awful in English coolness. Indeed, a king's majesty hedges the white man among savages; but as the winter advanced, I often wondered if my aura was quite bullet-proof. An old magician, who had no love for me as a rival doctor, used to stand on his house-roof daily predicting my death, and scaring the children as they came to school. Attendance slackened, the elders fell away from the congregation. I would preach about "dogs barking in the village," and send about the pictures of Her Majesty's war-canoes which had shelled two villages on the coast, and might look in on Gaetwangak if required.

At last in December the Gaetwinlthgul tribe came down from the hills to kill me. My people came out of the village to meet their visitors, hour after hour the two tribes were face to face in line of battle among the graves of the ancestors, talking me over. Why they discussed so simple a matter I never knew. My Indian interpreter had arrived from the coast by then, so, dressed in a parson's clothes, a bowler hat, and a Winchester rifle, he took command of the schoolhouse garrison of Christians. This consisted of Lost Creek Jim, Willie the Bear, and a half-witted youth

wreathed in permanent smiles, and they held the schoolhouse all day long while the two tribes talked and talked. The Gaetwinlthguls wanted an old gentleman called Niesh-cum-a-la, who had betrayed the lamented Jim to the constables. He was away fishing, and did not oblige. Then they demanded me. I was away on snowshoes with an Indian packer, buying their Christmas presents at the Forks, and never knew I was wanted for six weeks afterwards. They trailed away home, disheartened.

Thus ended a campaign of gunboats and artillery, bastions for defense, special correspondents, popular excitement, and every element of a successful war—except fighting.

VIII

THE TRAIL OF THE MISSIONARY

DAY after day I watched the black tumultuous river making its hopeless fight against the cold. The drops froze on the surface into globules like little peas, which tumbled down the current until they hit the bottom and stuck. Reefs of these ice-globules grew up, barring the stream, and making still ponds which glazed over every night. By day the thin covering broke, to pile on the reefs, while steadily the marginal ice crept out towards midstream. At last in late December a strong frost caught the drift and the floating globules together, and the Skeena became a field of black ice. On this field a crop sprang up of fern-shaped crystals, shining like diamonds in the sunlight. Then deep snow drifted over all.

I cannot guess how cold were the four months which followed, because the mercury thermometer generally stayed frozen. So near were the mountains that the sun never rose above them, but at noon would

shine through a cleft, giving me the time. Daily I tramped on snowshoes down to the village, rang the schoolhouse bell, gathered the grown scholars and the children beside the red-hot stove, gave lessons in reading and writing and English, or made maps on the blackboard to show them how the valley was planned, the district, the province, the continent, and the world. Afterwards there were visits to all the sick, and evening classes around my stove at the Mission. By public subscription we made the schoolhouse into a church, and on Sundays—sometimes on Saturday or Monday by mistake—we had matins, the reading, and the evensong. On Christmas Eve the congregation came to the Mission garden, and sang carols with exquisite clearness. Above them the moon hung low upon the peaks, lanterns gleamed like gems along the pines, and the snow was like a field of little stars. The faithful were fed that night, and on the morrow there was a surprising feast for all-comers, of burned hash and half-raw plum-pudding, with high revels afterwards and a Christmas tree.

There was much to do. The heathen lived healthily in their well-ventilated barns of hewn cedar; but the righteous must needs have stuffy little houses,

microbe traps to cultivate the phthisis which sent them up to heaven in a hurry. They sacrificed much to dress like missionaries, gave themselves airs and graces among the heathen, and were needlessly uplifted because successive white men had been sent from the outer spaces to learn their precious language. I flatly declined to learn that wonderful dialect, because they had need of English and I no occasion for Gaetkshian; wore gum boots or deerskin hunting-dress in church to show that religion did not consist of ugly garments; and discouraged the endless loquacity of their prayers as tending only to self-righteousness. It did them good to be shocked, because a Mission has no need to be a ranch for raising prigs, and a Christian Indian ought not to be distinguished from his fellows for unctuous rascality, vanity, and gloom.

A man came whining for counsel, saying that his neighbor had worried him. Of course the obvious answer was, "Go punch his head," but the doctrine seemed to be quite a new one, heterodox, and a scandal to the whole valley. Sometimes after that I shrank from giving advice, and indeed one must 'ware traps in the Mission field. My own friend, Lost Creek Jim,

was in trouble when his tribe demanded of him the custom that he hold a feast to his father's memory, and there give away all he had among the parasites of his native village. Was he exempt as a Christian, or must he perform this pagan rite and be ruined?

"Jim," said I, "as a Christian man you're free, but can you sneak out of being a gentleman?" It was as a pagan he became his father's heir. "Go and be a heathen for two weeks, then come home, and you'll find yourself a better Christian for the sacrifice."

So that savage gentleman went away for two weeks, and came back beggared, his eyes shining. He never talked much, but his wife made a fine sash and gave it to me. She noticed that Jim and I had become like brothers.

It was not easy at twenty-three to know all about everything; to be parson, school-teacher, and master of the tribe. But the medical and surgical work was specially awkward, and the big medicine book became the bane of my life. The author must have been very learned, so subtle and obscure were his thoughts, and all his words beyond human understanding. He must have lived in a chemist's shop, with all the drugs in the world on surrounding shelves.

I wondered how he would heal a compound fracture, with his interpreter in hysterics, with moss, bed linen, and firewood for appliances. Still the huge book was a most impressive exhibit, and the child got perfectly well in spite of me.

I was called to attend an old woman new stricken with paralysis it seemed, half her body dead and the other half not likely to be of much use. The mighty book urged drugs which seemed on the whole intended to stimulate. So I warmed up the lady's inside with a few ounces of black and red pepper, chili, mustard, curry-powder, and painkiller (a patent medicine), in a tumbler of boiling brandy. She took it, smiling, and perhaps from faith, or accidental mercury in the "painkiller," the clot of blood in her brain was urged to move on. Next day she was gathering firewood.

Much has been written about the natural savage taste for firewater, but these Northwestern Indians are possessed of a diseased craving for castor and cod-liver oil, and will perjure their souls for a drink. One buck Indian came to me in a terrible state of mind, beyond reach of earthly aid save by castor-oil. He had a mote dancing before his eyes these three weeks

past, and I must rescue him even at the cost of a dose. I made a mortal enemy by refusing.

And indeed I needed all I had for a young girl, who, to judge by the book, had every single malady named in its index except, perhaps, housemaid's knee. One Sunday I had just been to see her, and was at the schoolhouse preparing my interpreter for the evening sermon, when the death-wail arose in the village. Running to the place, I held up my hand in the doorway, crying, "Peace be to this house!" in a tone which silenced the row. The child still lived, but I had no brandy with me, and failing that said the Prayers of the Visitation while I felt her dying in my arms. Hitherto the neat formulæ of the Prayer Book had seemed of little use, drifting away on the wind, but now somehow the words went straight upwards like smoke in still air. I felt her die in my arms. The people were kneeling about us, and I hushed the wailing of the women, making my interpreter pray. "Oh, Shimoigaet! Shimoigaet Lahagh!" I was folding the dead hands over a still heart. Then a voice loud and tremulous broke in on the prayer. "Shut up!" I said aloud, because of all that was passing upwards in the still air; but then,

turning round, held my peace, astonished. Gillawa, the Chief, knelt praying at her feet. I knew him to be a good hunter, an honorable and fearless leader of his people; had seen him, but a few weeks ago, defy the whole Empire in frank rebellion. To capture this pagan chief was to win the tribe, and he was brought to his knees by the death of this child he had loved.

That evening as I walked beside the river, a mist lifted softly from the ice, the gaunt peaks glowed flame and violet in the afterglow, the lights of heaven shone out one by one, and every moment revealed still vaster distances of starry sky—it was the opening of the gates of Space. Only a scrub white man, and something of a fool, I was given a whole tribe in my grasp. These grave hunters were children to lead, if I could find the way.

When I buried the child it was with full Christian rites, for if she went without baptism that was my fault, not hers, and I had made so many mistakes that a little guilt more or less would not count.

Gillawa was leader of his people, afraid to leave his trust by turning Christian. I wanted him, as the best man in the tribe, to be chief, but with his conversion the chiefship would lapse to Tsimadeaks, the

father of the dead child. I could not spare him either, and he told me in secret that he was a Christian. I wanted him to be so openly. Could I get Tsimadeaks to make a solemn renunciation of his rights to the lapsing chiefship? Then Gillawa might come to me as leader, and both Tsimadeaks and all the rest would follow. I must go very delicately lest I set these two men by the ears. I asked them both to dinner. It was wonderful to see how these pure-blooded and untainted savages, who never in their lives had sat at a table, behaved like guests in some London club, being by instinct gentlemen. After dinner I made Tsimadeaks picture his heraldic sign on a paper, renouncing the chiefship; then persuaded Gillawa, as leader of his people, to lead them the only right way. For the rest of the winter both men came with their wives and children to school. The classes and congregations grew week by week, the work was doubled, and the fight was won.

The people let me know them better now, and they were curiously like white folk under the skin. Sometimes tired of school, we would set the little ones playing their winter games, blindman's buff, tag, or puss-in-the-corner, just the same as ours, but never were

civilized children half so funny. There was a game in which one side made imitations of the tribal beasts, the bear, the wolverine, the whale, the beaver, and the raven, while the other side paid forfeit if they laughed. I think our youngsters would like that if they tried it, and the elders joined in, as we did to the very point of bursting. And sometimes the old people would tell the tribal myths about the Deluge, the Age of Fire, the times of the man-beasts their ancestors, of inter-tribal wars, and the white man's coming. It was a hundred years since first the white man came, but the oral traditions are borne out to the very details by the explorers' printed records.

These nations of the far Northwest are not Red Indians, but Asiatics, with square heads and oblique eyes. Canoe life has made them giants down to the waist, tapering among the seaboard tribes to quite inadequate legs. They are practical, industrious, rather dirty, and very cheerful, with none of the delicacy, the dreamy mysticism of the red men. Still they have their pride and their mysteries, for one little boy waxed hostile and magnificent when I told him to wash his face. Moreover, when in a sermon I threatened to come down on Monday and clean the

village, Christian and pagan alike they were out for war. I wanted a fight just then to relieve the monotony, so, bright and early on Monday, I marshaled the faithful to the number of four, then marched on the village armed with picks and shovels. Half-way they lost heart, broke for the woods, but I could not well draw back from my given word. Full of misgivings, my back to the loopholed walls of ominously silent houses, I set to work, digging a military latrine among the graves of the ancestors. Now this was a sore point with the Gaetwangaks, that the ground was rich in gold, an alluvial mine of the Bonanza type; indeed one could dig up four dollars a day almost anywhere upon the village land.

They had driven miners away by force of arms, and rooting at their blessed ancestors felt rather like digging my own grave. Still they never fired a shot. Indeed, a little cold cheek is a better defense than plate-armor; for by noon the faithful joined me openly, watching my progress and giving advice; and the old women were busy as bees spring-cleaning the village paths. By night the place was as slick as a barrack, and the new sanitation was accepted as a fact.

So the lonely days went by, and I found that pedestal of all the virtues dull.

People often ask if Missions are any good—I think ungenerously. The work is always disheartening, not from wickedness in the teacher so much as from the total failure of the savage. We cannot raise him all of a sudden to the plane which we have only reached through many centuries of upward growth. He never attains the status of our manhood, the base on which rests our Christianity; and our religion yields but a sickly crop outside the boundaries of the Caucasian field. Meanwhile the missionary, a good man, and his wife, more useful than himself, preserve the savage from death by contact with our civilization, teach him all he can learn, heal his sickness, comfort him in trouble, and keep him out of mischief when otherwise he would be out on the war-path scalping our scattered laity.

Even with no conversions a year the missionary, loneliest of pioneers, remotest of frontiersmen, is a living protest to Heaven that we whites are not wholly ruthless towards the weaker brethren. If our gifts to the heathen were limited to trade guns, gin, and fancy diseases, not one of us would be able, when the

time came, to curl up and die without the most horrid apprehensions. But with ever so little love the work tells. On Easter Sunday I brought into church a few young buttercups picked up from the skirts of the snow. Afterwards, between the services, I lay on the grass under the sunlight, very sleepy, listening to the mountains, which now in full chorus of torrent and avalanche thundered their great song of the spring triumph. And when I rang the bell for even-song, all the little children came to me laden with flowers. These I laid upon the altar.

My work was done; but as my own endeavors fell so far short of the ideal, in justice to the Missions I must speak of better men who fought a greater fight among the tribes of that region. Mr. Dash, for instance, being a missionary broken loose from his church, and without any visible means of support, desired to work among the heathen, paying his own way by running a stock ranch up one of the northern valleys. Therefore he managed to scrape together a bull and cow, a he-goat and she-goat, a cock and hen, and with these, on rafts built for their transport, set off, attended by his family, up an especially wild river. After some arduous days the cow raised

objections to the proceedings, threatened to smash up her raft, and had to be tied to the kitchen stove. This was unfortunate, because when the raft capsized the stove anchored the cow to the bottom. Later on, the hen got spoiled also, and likewise the she-goat; but, nothing discouraged, Mr. Dash started his stock ranch with flocks and herds consisting of three items —a bull, a cock, and a billy-goat. Somehow the Cock and Bull ranch was not a success, and, besides his large family, the reverend gentleman had to support several devoted native retainers—these being old folk long past work, and given over to Christianity by their thrifty relatives. Mr. Missionary moved farther down the river, where by labor and contrivance he managed to set up a sawmill and a cannery. Few were the customers, small the sales, but so much more daring the enterprise. Hunting with his sons he got bear, deer, and other large game in the mountains, wild fruit from the forest, plenty of salmon from the river. These, each in their season, he tinned at his cannery, providing food for the household all the year round.

So the lights of a village glow in the depths of the forest, a bell calls across the snowdrifts, and a

Mission has been founded after that irregular, schismatic, and unworldly Example once set in old Galilee of the Gentiles.

But this gentleman is not the only capable missionary who has camped on the trail of the savage. One famous specimen I knew used to keep a harem, murder babies, and bury his victims in nail kegs among the cabbages; but I would rather speak of the hero-priest I met at Hesquiat. The holy Father was quite young when he was sent to convert the folks at Hesquiat. The doctors said his talk was all rot, but his magic dangerous. He had a little black box with one eye. This he would point at the folk, and the eye winked, then pimples broke out on their faces, they sickened and died of the magic. The whole tribe fled into the snow-drifted woods, leaving only the dying, the dead, and the holy Father with his box of magic. They prayed hard in the woods, but the pestilence was among them. The Magicians rattled and howled to scare away the Evil, jumped on the chests of the sick to stamp out the Devils, but still the people died. The Chief was dying in raving madness when he sent his little daughter to fetch the priest. He came, and standing at the door of the brushwood shelter, lifted

up his hand, saying, " Pax Vobiscum." But the mad Chief had a fowling-piece, and the hand which was raised in blessing came down bloody and riddled. Without a word the priest walked down to the water, and was bathing his hand, when a second time he was shot full in the back. He fell down half in the water, half on the snow. The people were angry, they would have killed the mad Chief, only the priest called out to them to be " merciful."

For many days the Father lay raving of " mercy," a new word which the women could not understand who nursed him. It must have been a strong magic, that unknown word, for from the time it was spoken the pestilence altogether ceased from killing the people.

After a long time a Bishop came up the coast, and he had a little silver cup from which he gave strong medicine. The priest lived. The Bishop wanted to take the Father away, but he would not go, begging to be still left with his people. Since then he has taught them all to understand the word " mercy," and they have tasted the strong medicine out of the little cup.

To return now from great matters to my own very small concerns.

It had taken me ten weary days to climb the Skeena torrent from tidewater, but shooting that long rapid by canoe was now a very dream of ease. I had seen no white man's face as yet that year, and at last had a friend for company. We squabbled like cats, save only when we stewed in separate gloom. (The exiles of that most lonely region are rarely on speaking terms.) We camped in the big timber among canaries and humming-birds, swept down the sumptuous curves, shot the big canyon, paddled through lanes among a thousand isles, watched the seals playing all sorts of games in the water; and always above us hung forest and precipice, the glaciers, snowfields, the heaven-piercing peaks which walled that chasm. When a canoe feels the first break of a rapid, and quivers from nose to tail ere she takes the plunge—I cannot be expected to share up that memory with strangers. We came with reluctant paddles to salt water, and camped among the perfumes of Spukshuat.

IX

THE TRAIL OF THE SAVAGE

WHEN I came out from the Skeena valley I was sick of being a missionary. At Victoria the Diocesan Synod gave me a suit of clothes, seventy-five dollars, and the offer of further training for Holy Orders. But I had need at the time for study in geology, history, folk-lore, and other matters tending to an understanding of the facts in sight; so settled down at Victoria, wrote books, and contributed these, as they matured, to local papers at two dollars and a half a column. My editors hoped that this ridiculous arrangement of paying for their padding would not be regarded as a precedent.

I only "settled down" in moderation, and under protest, because that year of study was broken by six months of delightful holidays, taken when chances arose for further travel. An Indian agent, who was interested in corpse-eating and other polite habits among the tribes, whistled for me from Comox. I came running, and found him impatient, with his

canoe, his constable, and an Indian, ready for a voyage among the Quagutls. We set out from Comox, pulling northward up the Gulf of Georgia from two in the afternoon until two in the morning, when we had an hour's nap in the canoe. Dawn broke over the needle-peaks and ice-fields of the Coast Range, the sun flushed the high snows on the Vancouver alps, and up the deep blue channel between the ranges we pulled on doggedly against the tide. When we got into the entrance of Seymour Narrows the main tide was running eleven knots, the back-water eight knots, and between these racing sluices we were caught in a series of whirlpools. I have a vague recollection of the canoe being spun like a top, while the other fellows howled anathemas at me, but, being asleep at my oar, was unable to attend to their troubles. The Indian agent contrived our deliverance, and shooting across the back-water we swung into a bay, where we camped, having rowed some thirty-six miles. At our camp-ground the straight pines, from twelve to fifty feet in girth, went up two to three hundred feet aloft, and in the shadowy aisles of that giant forest the ground had been torn up into a muddy yard by trampling herds of elk.

On the next stage of our journey we came to the canoe pass of Seymour Narrows. Here a large tide, trying to pass through a small channel, piles up into a cataract about eighteen feet in height. We camped for dinner, and when we embarked again the tide was spent, the water lying like green grass in the dead slack of the ebb, as we paddled gently through. With the rise of the flood-tide shortly afterwards the cataract re-formed from the opposite direction eighteen feet high, and falling to the northward. There are three of these salt-water cataracts among the channels of the Archipelago.

In those days the agent and I had much ado with the constable, who had a private grief and desired to die. We did our best to help him, for when we dug shell fish, and he dubbed them poisonous, we gave him the most generous portion. Yet he thrived. At night the tide would play unexpected freaks, washing us out of camp; on one occasion drowning our kitten, a pair of gum boots, and a tin of sausages. So death might have taken the constable, and yet, much as he longed to pass away, his bed was always highest up the beach. We came in time to a village of the Euclataws, who lately had murdered and burned the

crew of a coasting sloop. There we might have camped and been massacred, but the constable, greatly as he craved for release from this vale of woe, insisted upon our setting forth from the pernicious village. A strong gale was blowing, and as we skirted the north coast of Vancouver's Island that night, our canoe came near to swamping; indeed we should without doubt have perished but for the heroic labors of the would-be suicide. For many days we threaded the mazes of the Broughton Archipelago, calling on the worst tribes, searching for perils, that the constable might demise in search of a better world; but the cannibals eschewed him, the waves rejected him, he fattened on poison, and was bullet-proof. His was a charmed life, and no doubt he still survives to cheer his friends with prospects of his untimely fate and desired obsequies.

At the Quagutl villages I was curious to know why the coffins of the dead were slung in the tops of trees, and all the branches stripped away beneath. The agent explained that this was a proper and reasonble precaution, to save the bodies from being stolen away by cannibals. This opened up a curious field of inquiry.

Among savages, as with ourselves, the Healers and the Destroyers form important castes, but to practice either as a doctor or as a soldier the candidate has to perform certain religious rites. Thus the Red Indian, before claiming warrior's rank, must go alone naked into the wilderness, and there devote himself to fasting and prayer, until he receives a visitation, beholding the Great Spirit face to face. One may find details explained in the Book of Genesis. The Great Spirit reveals to the Indian lad his "wampum," maybe a stick or a stone, to all appearance, which is to be his talisman and guard him from all assaults of death. Thus fortified, he returns to his tribe, and after prayer submits himself to the ordeal by torture, which, if he pass unflinching, gives him the right to bear arms. I have seen these mysteries.

On the Skeena I witnessed a different rite, for there the ordeal by fasting admits to the priesthood only—the Order of the Healers. The Doctors came in procession out of a great cedar house, dressed in their ceremonial robes, and singing to soft drum-taps a chant of such wild beauty that no man can hear it without being deeply moved. Looking steadfastly out upon the river ice, we presently saw figures of

naked men hopping in strange mimicry of the tribal beasts from whom the clans were named. These, called by the music, drew near, entered the group of Doctors, and were given robes.

A horrible variant of these rites is the calling of Destroyers among the Quagutl tribes. The candidates, performing the Ordeal by Hunger, are supposed to encounter a loathsome spirit, the Ha-mad-si, who lives entirely upon human flesh. To be like him they then come to their native village naked, ravenous, to devour live dogs and to bite the tribesmen. Above all things they must prove themselves beyond human feeling, and in better days used to kill and eat a slave. Now that the white people have abolished slavery, the initiates must still perform the ordeal—so a body is stolen. My journey with the Indian agent and his constable was made for the purpose of getting proof that the custom still existed among those Quagutl savages. We failed, but when our voyage ended at Alert Bay, I learned that the Ha-mad-si had been delayed until we should take our departure from the district. This nettled me, so, borrowing a canoe, I set out with an Indian for Mamalillicullah, the village where the feast was to be held. Travel-

ing by night through dim channels, we paddled softly to an islet abreast of the village, and there lay hid, waiting for the beating of the drums in token that the function had begun. Three days we lay hiding, and, as I learned afterwards, were closely watched. When at last I realized that the Indians were awaiting my departure, I felt that their annoyance must be keen, and that any appearance of secret flight would encourage them to come after me with guns. So, to show there was no ill-feeling, I strolled through the village by daylight, and made my leaving conspicuously slow. That made the people think I was the Government.

On my return from that quest to Victoria, I had the pleasure of charging the Indian Department with propagating corpse-eating, drunkenness, scrofula, massacres, and other delights, among the native tribes; caused rude awakenings in official quarters; and won for myself a handsome collection of private enemies.

My second journey that summer was made with the Big Chiefs of the Hudson's Bay Company on a steamer chartered for a tour of the British Columbia coast. As this region is still unknown to tourists, and

surpasses all known seaboards in its grandeur, I crave indulgence for a paragraph on the scenery of one of the sixteen fjords. These outrank the Sogne and Hardanger fjords of Norway, but Knight's Inlet had not then been visited by a steamer for nearly twenty years. We had anchored at the entrance overnight, and when the day broke were unable to move because the place was densely veiled in fog. At ten o'clock this lifted with the swiftness of an explosion, and we steamed up a tide race two miles wide. For the first mile of their height the walls were clothed in jungle, though headlands stood out in naked ice-crowned precipice. Barring the way ahead rose a cliff some five thousand feet high, its brow a cornice glacier shining like some long emerald, from whence fell a lacework of diamond cataracts at least two miles in width. On the left rose a crag of pale gold as high as Snowdon, sheer from the sea, through cloud-belts, to a crown of needle spires. Swirling between such walls the channel swung, disclosing a lane of deep green water reaching away into infinite distance. The heights of mingled precipice and forest, glittering cataract and hanging glacier, went up to hoary stacks of snow-streaked rock, their white crowns stark

against an azure sky. So the dark gorge winds on in impenetrable shadow, while above the long avenue of peaks melts away into mists of light.

From that I must turn reverently away, and leave the funny little steamers, the exquisite canoes, and all the tender memories of savage life. The next adventure led me towards the Arctic for a dabble in piracy.

X

THE TRAIL OF THE YOKOHAMA PIRATES

THE *Adèle* was a fifty-ton schooner, readily pulled with oars, needing a crew of three men. She carried eleven. She was built in China, owned in Japan by Germans, and had British registry; but nobody was responsible save her Norwegian master, while, with five national flags in her locker, she played tunes on the teeth of the law. The Japanese, Russians, or Americans would have made her prize of war amid official rejoicings; but she was wary of traps, and her skipper, hard to catch, was known as the Flying Dutchman. Once, when I suggested that her proper flag was black, he called me a fool, and remarked that those old-time pirates were lacking in business aptitude.

The Flying Dutchman, drunk, consented to ship me for a voyage, the Flying Dutchman, sober, tried to back out; and drunk or sober would not sign me on

at the Custom House, so we arranged that I sail as a stowaway.

As to where we were going, or what was the game, I had not the least idea. I thought the *Adèle* was a sealer, but my friends in Victoria were derisive when I talked of a sealing voyage to Behring's Sea in November. At that time of year the fur seals were basking down somewhere in the tropics, not wreathing themselves with the ice of an Arctic winter. That puzzled me, but the voyage was sure to be pretty good fun, and a decided change of air. The *Adèle* arranged a plot for sailing without me, so I went down and camped on board.

We weighed, all hands drunk, and at midnight, we being then in the Straits of Fuca, the skipper made a very pretty demonstration after the manner laid down for use on discovery of a stowaway. After each burst of eloquence, I favored him with an engaging wink, giving an edge of reality to his performance. He signed me on as an ordinary seaman at ten dollars a month, and sent me off to the forecastle. When he came on deck at sunrise he found me coiled up on his sacred quarter-deck reading a novel.

I meant no harm. In the glory-hole forward I had found a rich air proceeding from oilskins, sea-boots, human interest, and an expired lamp, also bales of stockfish, decayed sea-oil, petroleum, tar, and bilge-water. Sea air always making me ravenous, I was drawn aft by the perfume of approaching breakfast, and that novel was only a blind behind which I sniffed and hoped.

To the underfed, overworked, maltreated British deep-sea sailorman, let me give this heartfelt advice —try a pirate. The food was sumptuous, served watch and watch in the after cabin, and we all got fat. As to the glory-hole, where six of us lived in such rich air, there was no sorrow. No landsman realizes the forecastle, or what real sailors are. The absolute honesty, the striving for cleanliness under difficulties, the mutual toleration, the brotherly gentleness before the mast have grown in a community which has no rights, whose wrongs are all grown old. I have seen little of beastial attributes as described by owners and masters, nothing of the jolly Jack Tar business, the very mention of which makes a sailor feel sick; but I have observed in many voyages a pride of craftsmanship, quiet courage, patience, endurance,

generosity among men who are treated worse than farmyard swine.

Not that I was treated like the swine, indeed a brother of the Lost Legion always finds Home before the mast. The same queer home-feeling comes over sailors when they stray among troopers, or gold-miners, or any kind of frontiersmen, for all are of one tribe. I was treated as a younger brother, everybody helping me to learn the trade, and, clumsy as I was, the seamanship ran in my blood by heritage. As to seasickness, I think that usually comes from a defective balancing of the body, and the poise of the horseman, cyclist, or canoeist, as applied to a rolling deck, is prevention absolute. I cured it the first voyage I ever made, within one hour, and have been exempt from that time.

Somehow, although unobtrusive and harmless, I had got to be known in Victoria as the "Mysterious Pocock"; and on board the *Adèle* nobody could be induced to believe in me as an "ordinary seaman." I was reported from the first to be some sort of evil spy or detective, and my shipmates would rather have sailed with the devil. No "ordinary seaman" would have a camera in his dunnage, and that one-eyed black

box was peculiarly offensive in taking evidence on board a pirate ship. All hands had sworn its destruction. Therefore I made a photograph of each man separately; but the cook, being recalcitrant, I smoked out with a sack down the stovepipe, and his portrait proved most expressive. Sweet are the uses of human vanity, for now no man on board really objected to that instrument, though all vowed still to destroy it. They also determined to disable me as a spy by marooning me upon some desert island. I always had misgivings when we came to a desert island. We landed on the outer coast of Vancouver's Island to cut a number of handy clubs in the forest. We landed at the Shumegin Islands, watered the ship, and bought two dories, flat-bottomed boats, in exchange with a trader for gin and potatoes. Still I had not guessed the purpose of the voyage, and nobody told me, because I was a "spy." We had a shooting trip there on the Arctic tundra, and with our revolvers killed a number of salmon. That country consists of grass-clumps, the size and height of dinner-tables, scattered on a field of mud. In the mud run little streams where the salmon lay asleep, and once awakened they made good hunting, for they swam with lightning swift-

ness. That night was the skipper's father's birthday, celebrated with a display in the cabin of thirty-five lighted candles, and a general drunk fore and aft.

Greatly refreshed, we put to sea, running through the Shumegin Islands, which are the best hunting-grounds left for the almost extinct sea-otter. Far to the north loomed the white alps of Alaska. We overhauled our mitts, sea-boots, oilies, ready for hard usage to come, and so, by a passage through the Aleutian Islands, entered Behring Sea.

Some two hundred miles north of the Ounimak Pass we sighted the Pribyloffs, and heading for St. George Island bore away under black lava cliffs in the midst of a driving squall. The hail whitened the decks.

"A man running along the cliffs, sir!" The mate had field-glasses.

"The son of a gun! My glass, quick," said the Flying Dutchman.

"Yes, dot vash so, the yumped up son of a gun. Stand by the anchor, there! All ready?" We had opened South West Bay, and came up all fluttering. "Down staysail! Down yib! Let go!" and down plunged the anchor.

The skipper called the boy.

"Tom, go get 'em each a good horn of yin."

"Four men coming out of the shack yonder, sir! They seem to have rifles!"

The skipper whispered confidentially to the binnacle something forcible between his teeth. Then, "In sail, and out with the dinghy," while the mate called for volunteers.

"I'll go," "And I," said Sven the Swede, and Dave.

The boy was up out of the scuttle with a square-faced bottle, which passed. The skipper jammed a gun into his hip-pocket, dropped over the side, and presently we watched the boat bubbling up and down as he headed for the surf. The four men were loading their rifles. Then I began to notice that black dots were swimming about all round us, the heads of fur seals. They were leaping and throwing themselves for fun, they came up close alongside, whooping "Pooh!" derisively, and wagged their hind flippers as they dived.

They swarmed about the boat, playing with it as though they had found a new toy; indeed one, gripping an oar-blade in his teeth, held on like a puppy to a root until the man missed stroke. The guard

ashore had leveled their rifles ready to open fire, and down came another squall.

When the air cleared, the skipper was ashore, having a pleasant chat with the Aleutian guard, while a bottle of gin settled down on its orbit in the most natural friendly way. He had been driven out of his course for Petropaulovsky with a broken binnacle, lost reckonings, and a leak. The Aleuts would have him understand that they were Government, United States Government, that he must not come ashore, that they did not drink—but still the bottle passed round. They had already sent a man to warn the village just across the island—we should be attacked in a minute, because they were Government. Yes, they might have time to finish the bottle—they finished the bottle.

"I suppose," said the skipper, looking innocently about him at the seal herds, "that you think I came after sealskins?" The Aleuts were smiling vigorously, as, with an affectionate farewell, the skipper jumped into the dinghy and shoved off through creaming surf.

The plan was to lure the Governor of the island on board with sufficient men, get them drunk, then land and raid the warehouse. But night was already fall-

ing, and soon we had other matters needing most serious attention.

I stood anchor watch from six bells to midnight, with orders to report to the mate any change of wind.

It was blowing a strong gale, but we lay just within shelter, screened by one of the points of the crescent bay; and though the sea was rolling white outside, I had no change to report when the seaman acting second mate relieved me. The skipper and the mate, drunk in the cabin, played cribbage, and argued as to our safety. The mate wanted to weigh, and get plenty of sea room. When the second mate took charge, I sat by the forecastle lamp reading, half curious concerning something which flopped about overhead, until Jim called me on deck. He had gaffed a fur seal on board, and we three played gravely, like sensible children, the seal a little shy, but not unwilling. There was a full gale blowing when I went below to turn in.

"All hands on deck!" The gale had whipped round that instant, and with hurricane strength swept in on the anchorage. The sea rose at us, the anchor was dragging, we were caught on a lee-shore. By

the light of the surrounding surf we cast off the gaskets, loosed the sails, and manning the windlass pumped on the brakes, broken sea voices croaking out the time, while the skipper and the mate squabbled, or fought drunkenly in the waist. The brake bars wrenched from our clutch, whole fathoms of chain tore out over the drums whenever the anchor fouled, but inch by inch we sweated home that cable, still drifting bodily shoreward. Now we were lifting on long combers, now sunk in the trough, still fighting with the strained brakes, pumping up and down, up and down, to the hoarse cries that kept us in time. Then with a wrench we were shaken off, thrown in all directions from the brakes. The cable had parted, we were hurling along on the rollers, and it was "every man for himself." We began to strip.

I noticed Dave, my chum, trying to sweat up the staysail, and wondered vaguely why he should take any more trouble. Suddenly the wind ceased, and looking up from my hold in the foreshrouds to windward, I found we were in dead calm under shelter of a sea whose white crown shone high as the mastheads, and, as we lurched at it, the gleaming, curved black wall arched, closing overhead. I yelled to the crowd,

gripped hard, the sea came crashing down, my back seemed breaking under the blow, I felt the schooner roll on her beam ends, crushed under, then, half-drowned, saw all hands heaped in the lee deck, their arms reaching up through white waters. The ship righted, slewed round by the sea, came up to the wind, the staysail filling—we were under way—we were saved! Broken adrift, the main boom swung lurching across the after-deck, but someone crawled to the wheel, steadied the helm, took charge, and, close as he dared to the wind, steered for the open sea. We jumped the rollers, wallowed in the trough, caught the gale again and steadied, chancing the reefs, getting rapidly under sail.

Was it Dave with his sweating on the staysail, or the breaker which slewed us? We gave our thanks elsewhere. We gathered at the water-cask, all very thirsty, watching the wind in the close-reefed sails aloft, staring back full of wonder towards the loom of the cliffs astern, and men spoke gently like women, as we counted heads to see if all were saved.

We had been fighting five minutes for life—two whole hours said the forecastle clock. One beam had been sprung by that breaker, but we had lost

nothing—except the boat, an anchor, and the ship's discipline.

We lay hove to, just beyond sight of land, waiting for the full moon before attempting to raid St. Paul's, the greater of the islands. The deck glazed over, the rigging was cased in ice, the wind blew a full gale at times, and the ground-swell in those shallow waters threatened at times to wholly demolish the *Adèle*. Scrambling up and down the ice-clad deck to keep warm, with wet mitts rubbing animation into a large cold nose, bowled over occasionally when we shipped a sea, one could only be cheerful in a very moderate way.

There were episodes. The flooding of the forecastle, a draught of smoke down the stovepipe, or the dinner all adrift in the cabin, would furnish occasional themes for vigorous comment. Twice we sighted whalers homeward bound from the Arctic, plunging on the majestic heave of the green swell, their canvas crisp, white pearl against purple cloud. We had good cod from the banks which the seal frequented, or would meet those curious sea-people ostentatiously sleeping out a storm, flippers folded across the breast, lordly whiskers keeping their "watch on deck." The

whiskers failed to warn one of these young gentlemen, and we had him—like fresh pork with a strong flavor of cod—for a Sunday dinner. As to his heart, liver, and kidneys, they might have come from a sheep, and were delicious. The skipper had a severe attack of total abstinence, there being no more liquor.

At the end of the second week, under a bright blue sky, and fresh breeze dead astern, we bore down, all winged out, on two white hills in the sea, which at sundown grew to a snow-clad island with gently swelling downs. This was St. Paul's, the big city of the fur seals, where three millions of them spend the summer to feast on the cod banks, rejoice and fight in their harems, and teach their little puppies how to swim.

We stood in the South West "Rookery" at dusk, and lay under the lee of the land, with darkened portholes and a covered skylight, leaving the gear all slack, to readily get under weigh.

Just abreast was the big rookery, the stench of which came down to us on the wind, bouquet of henrun multiplied by X, together with an absurd babble of bleats, screeches, and dog barks. How enticing it was, the sound of many seal voices, calling across the water, sneering, coughing, deriding, with impu-

dent mockery about us in the water, child mermaids bobbing up to screech "Po-o-oh!" at the toy schooner, then darting away to hide. There was no surf, plenty of wind for flight in case the village attacked us, plenty of moonlight for the raiding, and room on deck for at least four hundred skins—a fortune. So we all gathered aft and *mutinied.*

The skipper had promised a written agreement that each man (except me) was to receive fifty cents for every skin that was taken. That was in Victoria. At the Shumegin Islands the promise was withered down somehow to twenty-five cents a skin, with no writing. Wherefore Mr. Bloody Growl, A. B.,—that was only a pseudonym—put his baggage into one of the ship's boats, and rowed off casually with the laconic remark that he would go "fishing." The Flying Dutchman herded the gentleman home with a Winchester rifle; but still a sore feeling remained. Nobody could see why half a dollar should so dwindle into a quarter. It might go on shrinking into a dime, or vanish away into a vague regret. On the other hand the skipper was shy, with a blushing reluctance to sign any written evidence of his peculiar business interests. When he went ashore to prospect, taking

the mate, it was proposed that we slip cable and square away for Victoria. Could I navigate? No, nor anyone else on board.

The seals were barking and bleating and smelling to heaven around us, and the skipper came back with nineteen, which were put on deck snorting and dying dolefully, while we weighed, made sail, and stood seaward. So the snow-clad hills and foreshores of the land melted behind us.

At midnight, when I went below for coffee, the skipper asked me "was I one of the gang?"

"How much do I get on each skin?"

"Same as the rest."

"Then I'm with the gang."

I never got a penny, but, moved by some feeling of importance at the time, consulted gravely with the council forward, who told me cheerfully to go to blazes; so it was with a dwindling sense of importance that I curled my tail for a sleep. Thereafter I had the confidence of both the skipper and the mutineers, but kept my tongue tucked away. The cabin boy and I did watch and watch about for seventy hours, in sole charge of the ship, while the mutineers talked in the bows and the after-guard talked in the stern.

When the mutineers came down to the cabin for meals, the Flying Dutchman ostentatiously cleaned rifles, eye cocked, ears up, and ready. He had five people aft well armed; we had six forward with two revolvers —but the talk was much fiercer forward.

The after-guard consisted of the skipper, mate, cook, hunter, and boy, enough to take the schooner into the "rookery," club a deck-load of seals, and share the resulting profit, leaving the mutineers to stew in the glory-hole forward. When this scheme was resolved on the mutineers were charmed. They would wait until the after-guard went ashore, then slip cable and square away for Victoria, leaving the raiders to be captured red-handed by one hundred Aleutian riflemen.

I was fairly well pleased until the skipper decided on taking me ashore as one of the raiders; but then I spent half the night sewing a pocket in my skin-coat for private papers, a tooth-brush, comb, and soap, which might prove a comfort in jail. Having a very real interest at last, I ventured to propose to both sides a basis for possible compromise. "All hands on the lay, three bits for cows, and one bit for brown and gray pups," that was the formula on which

a treaty was arranged during breakfast, except that I was to get nothing. The skipper shrewdly dated the agreement on Sunday, making it quite invalid.

Of course it was an enormous satisfaction to know at last how to divide the spoils, although we had lost our only chance of successful raiding.

Twice we bore down on the islands, to find ferocious surf loom through the darkness ahead, but we had to wait five weeks before another landing was possible. Behring Sea is shallow, forty fathoms at best, with a thousand miles in the clear for sweep of storms. The ground-swell lifts to an enormous height, greatest, perhaps, of all the seas on earth. I have seen no spectacle of such dread grandeur as those gray-green ranges with their snowy crests. Sweeping down them had all the thrill of a toboggan slide or a water-chute; recovery for that small schooner seemed a miracle. After a month it got rather on our nerves, and Sven, the Swede, went gradually mad with fear. The weather grew colder, with snow or hail squalls hourly, freezing gales cutting across a deck which afforded no shelter. It was not easy to walk on the glazed deck, and a staggering promenade along the life-line was usually marred as a joy by green seas

breaking in board. The schooner was heavily down by the bows with ice, a fairy structure glittering from truck to sea-line—perhaps fairies might have found her comfortable. The moon was on the wane, and the sea decently quiet, when at last, in a blinding snow-storm, we bore down once more on the South West Rookery of St. Paul's. We thawed out the windlass with boiling water, chopped out a few tons of ice, and got the anchor clear by the time we reached our berth.

The dories were lowered, leaking like baskets; the clubs were handed down for murdering seals; and eight men were told off for the raid, but claws in the scruff of my neck dissuaded me from landing. "No spies allowed!"

Until the boats came home I was ruffled and sore, but the news they brought wholly assuaged my grief. The surf was pretty bad, and beyond that, in black darkness, you came to icy bowlders. These generally turned out to be old bull seals which weighed a ton, and were as big as a church, promptly showed fight, and chased you into the water. The first boat, fighting back through the tide, was carried away seaward, and finally reached us just at the point of sinking. Then came the second boat, also in a sinking condi-

tion, with the cheering report that Sven, the mad Swede, had deserted, no doubt to bring the enemy to our undoing. The crowd, worn out, had coffee and turned in, postponing further trouble until daybreak. I took the anchor watch.

Meanwhile Sven ranged along the shore, glad to escape being dismasted, burned, cast away, foundered, captured, shot, bitten by seals, or drowned in the surf —all of which fates he had predicted daily. When he got cold and tired he improvidently burned his shirt and oilskins, to make a nice fire and get warm. It was 2 A. M. when, pacing the lonely deck, I sighted that fire, and made sure of an attack from the Aleutian village. Not that I greatly feared, for, during the evening, in the Flying Dutchman's boots and a torn oilskin, the cook had paraded the cabin, setting forth how, with a live coal and a keg of powder, he would discomfort all boat attacks—a sure recipe, he said, for Aleuts. Still, to make certain that the schooner was not visible, I made hurried survey of shrouded skylight and portholes. The cabin boy had carelessly uncovered one porthole, and that I smothered. Upon which Sven, rather chilly since his shirt went out, supposed we had sailed, and gave way

wholly to grief. He thought of the flesh-pots and the warmth, he straggled back to where the schooner had been, and when in the breaking dawn he sighted his lost home, he let out yowls of joy. All the same the Flying Dutchman addressed him at considerable length by way of welcome when he came on board.

At 5 A. M. the raiding began again; but the surf was worse than ever, the boats insisted on sinking, and as to the seals, there were very few left on the islands except the grim old bulls, which attacked every man they saw. One man only escaped by a plunge into the cool sea. Day broke, and when there were no seal carcasses to haul on board, I had time for hasty memoranda with the condemned camera. The village looked disagreeably close, with smoke rising from all the chimneys; the American officials watched us through telescopes. They knew we could slip to sea before a boat had our range; but still they seemed to take quite an interest, and it was nice for us seeing strangers after so many weeks of the lonely sea.

It was almost noon before we weighed with seventy-five seals, gleaned from the almost deserted breeding-grounds. As we took in the boats one large seal raised himself from the deck to a man's height, then,

blinded with blood, swayed drowsily and fell, a creature so nearly human that we all felt like murderers. But the work which followed was much worse than murder, for as we stood to sea we skinned the carcasses, wading in blood and grease. The skin had to be flenched from a heavy layer of blubber, and what with the cold, the rolling of the deck, and the smell, I would gladly deny myself all the pleasures of sealing. We salted and stowed our prey, enough to redeem the voyage from total failure.

The whole ship's company save myself had traversed the Ounimak Pass on former voyages, but not one had seen the passage free from fog. As fogs are formed on the Newfoundland Banks by the meeting of the Gulf Stream with the Arctic Current, so is the Aleutian region clouded by a contact of the warm Black River from the Japan seas with the Arctic waters which flow from Behring Straits. Few men living have seen that volcano wrapped in almost eternal cloud which crowns the island of Ounimak. The land is under a curse, and no Indian ever camps there; the fog lies heavy on the Straits, and the sealers go past without knowledge. But for a whole day the *Adèle* lay becalmed in these mysterious waters, and

for once the great Shishaldin rose in glory, white without stain, from the surf which rolled on his coast up to the delicate smoke which veiled his crown. Three mile-high alps, set in a triangle, rise sheer as icebergs from a level moor, and from their midst, nine thousand feet in air, lifts that rare, exquisite cone, perfect in contour. There is no other mountain in the world sculptured in so magical a perfection. We saw him last, hull down across the sea, setting in the north, kindled to rose and flame by the declining sun, and so went on, attended by fleets of the nautili, out into the wastes of the Pacific.

Sometimes in the night watches of that homeward voyage, the Flying Dutchman would bring his concertina, and squat in the starlight ringing out old Norse melodies, wild, ferocious, triumphant, then of a sudden ghastly with despair. One could not see his foxy eyes and sensuous mouth, but only remember the daring, the seamanship, the generosity of this last of the Vikings.

My pleasantest memory of him belongs to those night watches when, the music over, and the first yawn not come, he told me stories of misdeeds, the saga of the Yokohama Pirates.

There were twenty schooners, the *Adèle* one of them, supposed to hunt sea-otter, really engaged in the robbery of fur-seal rookeries. The breeding-grounds of the Kurile group were destroyed, those of Saghalien and the Commander group damaged, despite the utmost efforts of Russian gunboats and garrisons.

The raiders would get the Cossacks drunk, then plunder the warehouses, and put to sea with a load of furs worth a fortune. But there was also fighting every year, either with the Russian guards or among the raiders, and many a time a schooner put out in flight, her decks littered with dead and dying men. Captain Dan Maclean, captured by the Russians, and condemned to penal servitude, is said to have worked in an underground mine chained to a fellow-convict, and fed by means of a basket let down on a cord from the daylight. The other convict died, and the raider said he was three days chained to the corpse before his cries were heard.

On the whole, what with fighting, captures, schooners foundered or cast away, and the heavy suasion of the Japanese Government, the Yokohama Pirates were fairly wiped out, and the *Adèle*, sole

survivor, was constrained to seek refuge at the British port of Victoria. This must have been about the year 1886. The Flying Dutchman now gave up "sea-otter hunting," and the *Adèle* became a decent pelagic sealer, one of our sealing fleet. She was captured by an American gunboat, taken to San Francisco, and her crew tried amid much public excitement. There proved to be no jurisdiction, and the *Adèle* was released; but the Flying Dutchman was very sore, because he had actually for once been committing no crimes whatever, and for the outrage of his capture swore vengeance against the United States Government.

For five successive winters he raided the Pribyloff Islands, doing untold mischief and making plenty of money; the fourth voyage, when I was with him, being a failure. On the sixth voyage the *Adèle* was cast away, and her bones are bleaching on the Queen Charlotte Islands. When I last heard of the Flying Dutchman he was a miner on the Vancouver coast, and most gallantly led in the rescue of a shipwrecked crew cast away on some outer reef. Big fortune to you, last of the Vikings!

The night was resplendent under the full moon,

our sails pearl-white and all asleep against the deep sky. The swell breathed as though the sea were in slumber, the little craft its dream. Only the spray, flashing like diamonds under the forefoot, the ruddy light from the binnacle, the cold blue shadows swaying on the deck, the snowy gleam of planks, bulwarks, and spars, sharpened the picture into actual fact, which must otherwise have melted into those depths of sea and sky wherein we lay. Slowly the moon, all ruddy in a haze, went down, and foundered like a burning ship. Out of a pale, sweet light diffused along the east arose a star, the morning star of Promise, white on the brow of the dawn, soaring upward. Rose-flushed came the young day, conquering the heavens with flame-bright shafts of glory, then lifted a mound of dazzling fire, and the sun leaped clear from the sea. Along the pale-green swell, far in the northeast, glowed a violet film of towered, embattled mountains. Day chased the night along its summits, when, in the utter stillness, the mate took a turn or so along the decks, and gave the salutation to the watch:

"Land ho!"

XI

THE TRAIL OF THE PROSPECTOR

AFTER my return to Victoria I was quite good for months, writing insipid stuff for the local Press, and behaving prettily at evening parties, while the Flying Dutchman, and the Bull Seal, a retired pirate, aroused the sealing community against me. My harmless book on the Yokohama Pirates—afterwards scornfully rejected by all the publishers—had to be dictated secretly at night to a stenographer, who sat between locked doors and an open strong room, grievously alarmed. Coarse plots were hatched for my discomfort, and once my own chum, Dave, was sent to lure me into a drinking-hell. I had pushed open the door to enter, when a detective jumped from behind and grabbed me just in time to save me from being trapped. Failing violence, the Flying Dutchman made funny little conspiracies which ended in attacks upon my personal repute in the leading Canadian papers. Much as I liked the

little Viking, I sent for him then, and made him apologize on pain of the most disagreeable consequences. So we shook hands, and I was able afterwards to walk the streets unarmed.

This tea-party period lasted until spring, when certain merchants subscribed to send me to the new mining-camps in Kootenay. I was to advertise that district in the Press, and, after the liberal Western manner, my backers handed me a check, giving no orders, asking for no reports, but trusting me to do my best in attracting capital to the country. The sun was shining, the birds were singing, when I left a Northern Pacific train at Kootenay Station in Idaho, and took the coach for the North.

"I'm kind o' curious," said the stage driver, "to know how we're goin' to find Pack River. That ole river—she may be tearing the bones out, and again she may have gone down a piece. The bridge carried away on Monday, and she'd riz five feet more when I swum her yesterday."

Once the wretched horse, sinking into a mud-hole, emerged half suffocated, and we went jolting on over stumps. Then the off-wheels, climbing a three-foot log, jolted me off the coach and wedged me inside the

near fore-wheel. Being rescued, I got back to my seat, and we jolted on through the forest.

The stage road came to an end at Bonner's Ferry in Idaho, a little frontier trading post where trappers in long-fringed deerskin hunting-shirts sat around thinking through the summer months. One of them was a guide, with a business in conducting "tenderfoot" hunters, who went out with him but never came back, and lately his trade had slackened.

A steamer had come over the road in sections, and plied northward on Kootenay River down to the British boundary and the mines.

From the mouth of the river, just north of the Canadian boundary, the big lake reached away some seventy miles, walled with high mountains.

In the days of our grandmothers a canoe crept across that lake, and voyageurs of the Hudson's Bay Company camped on a beach of silver ore. Mining was none of their business, but the hunters saw what they took for lead among the ashes of their campfire. That is why they used to go there afterwards and make bullets, never dreaming that it was silver with which they filled their pouches.

It was quite by accident that the Kootenay mines

were found. Some hunters camped on top of the mountains, sought pasturage among the snowdrifts for their ponies, and found—wealth. Across the land lay a belt of gorgeous ore, glowing vermilion and violet, marred only by dirty black patches of solid silver. Such is the "Silver King," and the news of the Hall Mines brought a rush of prospectors. Three years later, when I got to Kootenay, there were two hundred people in the Nelson Camp, and at least a hundred at the Warm Springs. I think I brought the first medicines into Kootenay, and certainly there was excitement when I produced a pocket-case of drugs to treat a man for a cold. He was so affected that he promptly went off on a drunk and got the horrors. There were a score of Englishmen in Nelson, and I pricked up my ears at hearing my native drawl. But they were—except two old hands—cold to me, deuced chilly, because I herded with a lot of beastly American prospectors.

The beastly prospectors steered shy of these preposterously useless idlers, who neither toiled nor sweated, nor looked pretty, but had puffed sleeves to their riding-breeches, and lived haughtily on remittances from their parents. The young Englishman

needs half murdering with trouble before he learns any facts. I know!

By the earmarks and the brands of the herd, by their clear observant seeing with scant comment, by the free swing of shoulders which could not endure a coat, the lungs which abhorred a house, the hooked-up ready fingers, the tanned hide, the thrown-on clothes, the dust of the trails, these beastly prospectors were of my tribe, and I had found another cohort of the Legion. They suffered me gladly in every tent and cabin on the hills, included me in the conversation, told me the things always hidden from strangers. So I learned the trail of the prospectors, and, rather than tell my own very trivial adventures, I want to describe the trade.

On the Frontier, where civilization is regarded as a taint, a " respectable " man might starve before anybody trusted him with money; but when a frontiersman is broke, and wants to explore for minerals in the wilderness, he readily finds some friendly saloonkeeper, or trader, to put up a grub-stake. This consists of a season's supply of flour, beans, bacon, sugar, and coffee, with arms, tools, blankets, harness, and pack animals. In return the speculator gets a third

interest as shareholder in every discovery. But the "free miner" does not face the appalling risks of travel all alone in countries where the mere straying of a horse, or sprain of an ankle, may involve a lingering death by starvation. Two or three partners make the little companies, which, like a ship putting out to sea, must depend on experience, judgment, and nerve for a safe return to mankind.

One has to search for minerals usually where the slopes are a maze of dead-fall under the pines, and force a way through the underbrush, fighting a swarm of mosquitoes. One stubs one's toe on some lurking stone—a stumble over that, a muttered curse, a glance of reproach at the stone—it is stained with yellow carbonates! Down with the pack, and the search begins up hill. There is more yellow "float," fragments are scattered here and there for perhaps a thousand feet. Then they cease, there being no sign of mineral above a certain line. On that line a cut must be made to bedrock, a trench opened, exposing the overfallen, iron-capped outcrop of a mineral-bearing ledge (reef). A city may result from that discovery. Above the cut a tree is blazed, and on it pinned an inscription:

"*Notis.*—We Jock Brown and Tom P. King locate a mining claim known as the Grubstake mine and claims 1500 feet long, running 750 feet northerly and 750 feet southerly from this center stake, and 300 feet west and 300 feet east, located this 16th day of July 1889. JOCK BROWN.

"TOM P. KING."

Jock goes to the nearest Recorder's office, many days' journey perhaps, displays his mineral, pays fees, and makes record. Blind Tom holds the ground for both until Jock returns. After that so much work must be done every year or the claim lapses; but let claim-jumpers go warily, because Messrs. Brown and King have rifles, and public opinion to back them if they kill.

Such is the opening chapter in the history of a mine. Two hundred feet below the blazed tree a tunnel is blasted into the mountain-side, fronted by a platform of broken rock where the ore lies in glittering heaps. The platform, steeped in perfume from the forest, bathed in warm sunlight, is a playground for squirrels and butterflies; and one may look out over the pine tops on range upon range of alps. Near

by is the forge for sharpening steel drills, and a path leads away to the cabin, deep-hidden in the woods.

The sun has touched the logs with golden light, pools of blue shadow lie below the walls, and within there is cool dusk, the luxury of the brush-strewn bunks, the restfulness of a welcome. If the door has been locked against bears, the key hangs near as an invitation to eat, tarry, and sleep, but to wash up and lock the door before leaving.

One evening at the Grubstake, Tom was resting, Jock cooking supper and washing up the breakfast things. "A prospector," said Blind Tom, glancing up at me through his bowed spectacles, "is a dam' fool anyhow. He lets himself out as a mule, he packs his grub and his blankets up ungodly steep hills, he works like a bull team opening up his claim, and then he sells out to a tin-horn capitalist, and puts up drinks for the crowd until he's broke. All the boys know he's a fool. Say, pardner," he called over from the bunk to Jock, who was parboiling bacon, "if this here transmigration of souls is straight doctrine—don't boil it all away, Jock, we aint got much—I guess I'll be an aristocrat in my next life, and run a gymnasium for young ladies."

After supper Jock asked me: "Say, hev you got a penknife?" I lent mine with some pride, and he saw the pride. "Nice knife," he said, abstractedly thrusting it in his pocket. "Tom, I've *made* a knife."

Both men watched me cynically, to see if I would bear the test, the sharing of all things in common. Theirs was a religion of action, coupled with skepticism, a sensitive honor towards all good men, while they cheat the eye-teeth out of a capitalist; a life of self-denial, qualified by debauches; a love of the wilderness, which they curse obscenely; courage, with lapses of hysteria.

But in all the bewildering complexities of natural history that last is the strangest trait. Partners who love one another very deeply will quarrel after a long winter of their solitude. One fails to wash up the dishes, the other resents the neglect, and they squabble morosely for months. Then in a fit of hysterics one or the other gets shot through the heart "by accident"—and profoundly mourned. A woman in hysterics laughs and sobs, but a man kills.

The prospector is a fool of course, because he finds the silver and gold for all nations, but himself goes ragged. In his trail come the experts and capitalists,

the working miners and chemists, to build an industry to furnish new blood for the arteries of commerce. So much has happened in Kootenay, now laced with railways, populous with towns, a theme of the Stock Exchange, an excuse for gambling in "Hall Mines" and "Le-Roys." A civilized community has arisen, a new district, big as England, is added to us. The prospectors were bought out, threw their trashy money to the winds, explored two thousand miles northward into the wilderness, discovered the Klondike, and a district as big as Western Europe is added to us.

They are fools. Saint Paul the Apostle called himself a fool, who, being a Jew, stayed poor; who, being a Roman citizen, was not a shareholder, but left the soothing sport of persecution, and, like a modern prospector, was in journeys often, in labors, perils, and sufferings for things beyond money, intangible, of the spirit. The fool frontiersman, outcast from a civilization of grubs, lives near to nature, seeing also things intangible.

When I had visited the claims in the explored districts of Kootenay, and done a little prospecting to know how it felt, I cajoled the prospectors into sub-

scribing a fund to advertise for capitalists, and spent their money on a journey to the city of Spokane in the neighboring State of Washington, where most of the large mines were owned. Spokane was very civil, giving me the freedom of the Mining Exchange, the run of the business offices, and having me interviewed, even in bed at midnight, for one of the newspapers. I was made father to such imaginings as seemed to mining men like ravings of lunacy, and got one reporter sacked. But Spokane was only civil. Advertise Kootenay! Why, the mine-owners wanted to bribe me to silence. The discoveries must be kept dark until they could cheat all the prospectors out of their claims in those hills.

So I was starved out, heavily in debt to the men who had trusted me. It took me seven years to heal that scar.

XII

THE TRAIL OF THE TRADER

WITH three dollars left, and an hotel bill ripening swiftly, I came to an end of my madness regarding Kootenay. A Colonel entirely non-military had approached me on the subject of a leaflet in praise of his bogus town-site known as "Columbia, Wash.," and destined to be the future metropolis of the West. I wrote the lies and he signed them, made a map which he improved with a fancy river scrawled across several ranges of mountains, then published the advertisement, and got fifteen dollars in payment. The town-site purported to be terminus of a new railway, and on the date of publication I was in the Colonel's office when a stranger called.

"Colonel in?" he demanded.

"You'd better wait," said the office boy.

"I won't. Tell your Colonel that I'm the President of the Y. P. Q. Railroad, and that if he doesn't

withdraw his pamphlet by sundown I prosecute. Good-day."

The pamphlet was withdrawn.

A year before my visit the city had been burned, and on the blackened site stood now a new Spokane in massive buildings of granite, marble, and steel. If I could photograph those buildings, and produce engraved blocks, they would sell readily to the merchants for use in advertising. So taking the negatives with my Kodak, I offered double pay to a photographer for prompt delivery of copies. He saw shrewdly that there was money to be made with his own camera, and prudently daubed my negatives with wax, so that the copies represented Spokane in a fog. My solicitor was indignant at the trick. "You've got a perfect case, young man, a convincing case. Take my advice and—drop it!"

"Why?"

"You'll get a verdict from which he can appeal, and go on appealing from court to court until the Day of Judgment. This is a free country, and there's no such thing as justice."

Formulating a new scheme on the way, I called on the Editor of the *Scarehead*. "Spokane," said I,

" is giving an Exposition.—Give me a horse, with my expenses, let me ride over your district, and I'll write up its industries for a big special edition of the *Scarehead*. Of such an edition I can sell to the city, the county, the Mining Exchange, and the Exposition Committee at least fifty thousand copies for free distribution as advertisements."

The Editor consenting meekly, I arranged that the Mining Exchange should send a deputation to wait upon me at my hotel. To these gentlemen I explained the newspaper plan, and undertook during my ride to take a couple of hundred photographs depicting the industries of their country.

" From these," I said, " I'll make lantern slides for illustrated lectures, praising your district, and only want the use of the Mining Exchange building, and a thousand dollars cash."

These things being promised, I went, representing important interests now, to the Secretary of the Exposition, and made offer of enlargements of my photographs to form a picture gallery, together with engravings of the same to make a souvenir book. Terms being arranged, I returned, full of innocent joy, to get horse and equipment from my Editor.

He said he had changed his mind.

"Really? I made up your mind for you, such as it is—why worry? I've promised the whole city of Spokane to ride out on this business after lunch. Get the horse!"

He got the horse. Truly the animal was rather like a towel-horse in some ways, but the livery stables where I baited would charge the usual terms. The creature purported to be alive, and by pushing behind I might travel some miles in a day. The saddle was on a scale of splendor becoming to such a steed, and I was provided lavishly with funds for the first three days. Afterwards I was to live by collecting cash from defaulted subscribers, while I made a thousand-mile tour within the month, preparing at leisure a special edition, a lecture, a book, and a picture gallery.

Were there resources of land, minerals, or timber tributary to this city of Spokane? Yes, there was land, for I rode eight miles across naked desert before I came to a farm. The citizen, producing naught, held that land until the laboring community should give it value, and where there was a farm he sucked at the mortgage. There was mineral, but the citizen,

producing nothing, must rob the discoverer, steal the claim, and sell out. Meanwhile he convulsed the markets with speculation in his paper shares. There was timber, but the citizen, producing nothing, arranged for hewing away his own trees and burning his neighbor's, until the mountains were stripped bare, and the gentle rivers were changed to destructive torrents, spoiling the water powers and reducing profitable land to irreclaimable desert.

As I rode a rotten horse for a rotten editor, on behalf of a rotten city which was giving an "Exposition," slowly the word rolled over my tongue until, catching its flavor, I spat. An Exposition? an exposure, a show-up, a dead give-away, the pricking of a bubble, the bursting of a lie. In one large room of that city I had found partitioned off some forty offices of different firms. Sharing a watermelon among the gang, I had asked them to put up a general signboard at the door, "The Robbers' Roost," or "The Forty Thieves Limited," at which device they were pleased. Three years ago when I passed Spokane by train, I found that the poor boom city had never recovered from its Exposition, but visibly the place lay shrunken and stagnant upon the dusty Plains. For

twenty thousand people, having neither a book shop, nor a decent bath, nor any manly games, had mistaken their venture in calling it an improvement upon the desert. Vulgar, ignorant, unscrupulous, brave, enterprising, and cheerful, they built in speculation, not in labor, towers of dust to confront the winds of heaven.

For three days I rode heartsick upon my hopeless venture, ashamed among the honest farmers at their harvest. I had stooped to the cheap methods of cheap men, become part of the froth upon the mighty waves of American endeavor. Envious of Yankee smartness parading in diamonds while I went in debt, I had been moved for just a week to play with rogues, and trump their shallow game, knowing all the while that a ferret can wriggle through smaller holes than a swindler, a fox teach shyness to a thief, or a skunk outbluff and outstink the worst of us. I had not the stomach to play such games for long, and now went sick with remorse along the sunny roads, envious of American manliness at work in every field reaping the wheat. But my heart was crying for the mountains, for the wilder country, the gentler men of the camps. At noon of the third day I wrote from a

village to my Editor, saying that his skeleton was feasting at the local stable, and might be collected on payment of the bill. Preferring rather to be a man on foot than a rogue on horseback, I set off to tramp for the nearest mining camp.

The country was a flat desert, bounded by shimmering mists of intense heat, its equator the railroad, and in the middle I found a house. There had been nothing particular to eat, and only hot puddle to drink, so to reach that section house for navvies was worth a struggle. Also I had two half-dollars, and much hope, when I knocked respectfully on the open door. Saluting the woman inside with lifted hat, I held out one of my coins, asking for a meal, at which she screamed, snatched up her baby, and bolted.

I stood out and looked at myself. A cowboy hat, a blue flannel shirt, blue canvas breeches, long boots past their prime—and one dollar. Yes, she had taken me for a tramp, for she shrieked, snatched, and ran. I was a tramp.

There was a " construction train " not far beyond the house, which gave me food for one of the coins, and a ride which continued more or less until three o'clock the next morning, delivering me in reasonable

repair at Cœur d'Alene Lake. I tramped on all day beside that lake, and up the river beyond. One wild animal I met on the track, and crept past him safely through a ditch, too poor to dispute the way. He was a skunk. The deer flicked their tails at me and ran, because they were venison and I looked so hungry. A family of cougars, papa, the missus, and the kids, snuffed at me on a bush-trail in the dusk, for they were famished and I smelt like food. At last, late in the night, I saw lighted windows ahead, and so reached a cluster of ruinous cabins known as the Old Mission.

Now I had resolved to be a photographer in the Cœur d'Alene Mines, and was minded of a certain hireling whom I had fed at Spokane and left in charge of my baggage. He was a distressful and useless object, but if he joined me at Old Mission the luggage would do to pawn, and the youth might serve for a partner. So for three days I fattened at the Old Mission Hotel, running up a bill most patiently, while the hireling at Spokane, having endowed himself with all my worldly goods, blandly decamped.

It was a queer hole, the Old Mission, where I was fattening against future need. When the daily train drew up, a gambler used to attend on the platform

with a thimble-rig outfit and a pile of gold. Then his three partners came to play against him, winning at every guess, filling their pockets with wealth. Sometimes a passenger, seeing their luck, would venture a twenty-dollar piece. He lost. A most respectable gentleman was that gambler, in clean linen, frock-coat, top-hat, and a benevolent smile; but I think my inquisitive presence watching the game began to annoy him after the second day, and so the whisper spread that I was a spy. On the third day I was openly accused in the barroom, and my laughter at the charge turned to a sickly grin when I found out how real was the suspicion.

That Indian Reservation, which I had crossed afoot, was on a near date to be thrown open by Congress as public land free to all comers. On its western edge the farmers had gathered, led by a Mr. Truax, ready for a big rush and scramble to seize the ground. Coming from thence, I had blundered into an evil crowd of gamblers and desperadoes waiting on the eastern edge to drive the farmers away by force of arms, and themselves capture the Reservation as Mineral Lands. I was therefore a spy from the Truax gang, and the crowd determined to lynch me.

It was very awkward. The least movement towards an escape would certainly hasten the crisis; I was in pawn at the hotel; my camera, endeared to me by so many similar associations, had fallen a prey to the landlord; and, worst of all, was my nerve-shattering alarm at the very idea of being lynched. That extreme sensibility to peril may be safely cherished as an inward grace, but on such occasions I always want to screech. It would never do, the very littlest privy expression of feeling meant the embarrassment of a necktie under one of the telegraph posts outside. How was I to get my camera, evade the landlord, escape these desperadoes, and reach the woods?

A freight train was bustling about, ready to start for the mines; the long-shadowed sun shone out from behind a cloud, and that inspired cheek which has guided me through life flashed the solution. I turned with delight to the landlord. "Hello, here's the sun! Get your family—come on, boys!—range up outside, gimme the camera—thanks—look pretty—we'll have your photograph."

When an angry Providence bereaved mankind of our tails, the piteous wound was salved with the gift of vanity. I got my camera, took a photographic

group of a benevolent landlord, a brushed-up family, and some beaming desperadoes, then with a hurried good-by caught my train at a run. Afterwards they understood, but the train had swung round a corner before they could fire.

Presently the Conductor came along the empty flat cars, discovered me, and demanded a bribe. Otherwise he would pitch me off according to custom, and getting thrown off trains is almost as bad as being hanged. "Will you?" said I. There is a philosophy of clothes, and the most hardened blackguard on the American railways has a wholesome fear of cowboys. As the Chinese terrify their enemies with paper tigers and wooden guns, so I always wear a cowboy hat on the Frontier, and the Conductor doubted whether it would be quite wise to indulge in a murder.

"I'll let you off," he said, "at one dollar."

I had half a dollar, but no passion for sacrifice, so I got him to stand on the jumping flat car while I made believe to take his photograph. "I charge a dollar, so that's all right." And it was so.

Late that evening the gravel train swung into Wallace, the capital of the Cœur d'Alene Mines. The

town was then a place of fifteen hundred people, jammed at the meeting of four gulches in the heart of the Bitterroot Mountains of Idaho. Just a month ago it had been totally wiped out by fire, but Western towns seem never to feel quite well until they have had their spring cleaning. Certainly Wallace was "booming." The masons and carpenters were working double time, the canyon rang with constant noise of hammers, and, on the sixtieth day from the fire, the ground was covered not only with tents and shanties, but a litter of wooden houses and solid brick buildings all alike completed.

Winter was setting in, and on the frosty night of my arrival I spent much time considering how to make my last half-dollar suffice for supper, bed, and breakfast.

Driven for lack of a coat to seek shelter, I was in Denver Shorty's gambling-hell, subtly plotting economies, when my thoughts were distracted by a puzzling movement of the crowd. A man held a slip of paper in front of a gas jet, loudly challenging all comers to read what was written thereon. The words, written backwards, were easy enough to scan—why should all these idiots be wrapped in bewildered

silence? Scornfully I read out the phrase, "*What—will—you—take?*"

"Beer!" answered the man with the paper; "Whisky, in mine," said another; "Wall, stranger, since you allude to the drinks," a third man saluted me gravely, "I think mine shall be a John Collins." "Cocktail!" chirped a fourth. I had invited fifty men to drink with me. Slow, sad, severe, I left that warm saloon, no longer plotting economies. The supper, the bed, and the breakfast had flicked off beyond my horizon.

For three days I lived on my camera, which fetched three dollars, but when that was all eaten up there had to be some sort of crisis. For so respectable a community, where bartenders and gamblers corruscated with diamonds, a tramp with no coat to his back had not the least chance of employment. So I went to the City Marshal. Would he request the Spokane police to collect the useless object who had sequestered my baggage?

"Why, certainly," said the Marshal. "Meanwhile, young man, have you remarked that we're having a right smart snap of winter? Just you stray over to that dry-goods store on the corner, rig

yourself out with a suit of store-clothes, and tell them to charge it to me."

I could not accept, but I have never forgotten.

My baggage was gathered in by the Spokane police, and, better still, a magazine editor remitted me twenty dollars for some published ballads. The magazine was soon swamped in bankruptcy, but meanwhile I was bloated with sudden wealth, no longer the tramp hunting for a job, but a capitalist seeking investments. The drink business was full up with fifty-five saloons, and the gambling-hells, dance-houses, and theater met all local requirements.

There was in the whole place but one boarded sidewalk, where free American citizens could walk secure from being drowned in the mud-holes. This densely crowded pavement was continued across a wooden bridge spanning the Cœur d'Alene River, and beyond that a railway skirted the bank, walled on the farther side by precipice. A thousand men came daily to that bridge for fresh air, and the solace of spitting into the river. Just in midstream the bridge made a slight turn, forming an angle. It would be easy to throw a plank across that angle and hang on outside, dealing with mankind over the handrail. There

was the best business-stand in the Cœur d'Alene Mines, and it had escaped the attention of traders.

The City Marshal would not object—we consulted over a cocktail; the county was pacified, for I bought a five-dollar license; but there remained the Committee of Public Safety, pledged to lynch bad men and to pitch out tramps like me. I called on Dan, Chairman of the Vigilance Committee.

"Where?" he yelped.

"The bridge," said I, very humbly.

"You can't trade on the bridge."

"Don't want to. Whose is the air over the river?"

"If you want to trade there, take out a license from Heaven.

"Will you interfere?"

"No, I guess not. We never interfere outside our jurisdiction."

In his capacity as a merchant, Dan sold me a stock of cigars; and with the Vigilance Committee for a friend one can commit all the crimes in the calendar.

Next day, with a plank for a perch, hanging in mid-air above ice-drift and rolling bowlders, I peddled cigars across the handrail, but certainly was not trad-

ing *on* the forbidden bridge. The original plank spanning the angle grew piece by piece into a platform, then I got two packing-cases, slung by wire nails from the rail, which served as counters for an increasing stock. To keep out the worst of the wind I contrived slight walls at the back and sides, to preserve my wares from the snow a roof poised overhead. Next came a dog-hole door under the rail, sliding panels of glass to close in the front, a stove for comfort, bedding to roll down on the floor, a kitchen equipment. At first the house had hind-legs reaching down into the river, but the question arose as to whether those limbs rested on the town land, county land, stood in the State of Idaho, or were amenable to the discipline of the United States. I cut away those compromising hind-legs, and with them went all danger of being dragged from my nest by ice-drift, together with questions of rent, rates, and taxes. Such levies could hardly be exacted from a house which occupied no human rights. The weight was so adjusted that the house poised itself without strain, swaying easily as a bird's nest in the wind, jumping gracefully when a cart shook the fragile bridge.

At the end of six weeks I was free of all debt, with plenty of credit, and one hundred and fifty dollars' worth of stock in fruit, tobacco, and sweets, laid by from my profits.

By way of advertisement I displayed a blackboard, daily renewed with hieroglyphic designs, in the ancient Egyptian style, relating to topics of the day, also doggerel verses, and in all the saloons rude devices painted with ink, which purposed to show kittens smoking my cigars, babies crying for them, pelicans stealing them, and desperadoes in full flight to elude the strength of their fumes. I was clearing three dollars and seventy-five cents a day.

All these matters were observed by a certain tough who hung out at Denver Shorty's gambling-hell three doors off. This ingenious gentleman got a couple of pine trees stripped, squared, and thrown across the river just behind my house, the ends resting on either bank. On these timbers he began to run up a commodious wooden building, a saloon. He laid his floor the whole width of the river, erected his scantling, and began to fill in the walls. But he had no possible frontage, so he went to the City Council, offering at his own charges to widen the bridge up to the foot

of his wall. The City consented, and I was to be effaced.

His timbers committed a gross trespass to the northward upon the Railway Company's embankment, and to the southward on the land of a tame German saloon-keeper. I tried to persuade these injured and aggrieved parties to saw through the offending logs and drop Long Shorty's premises into the river. Unhappily the desperado was handy with a gun, and the victims did not feel sufficiently affronted. Moreover, my enemy was a citizen of the Republic, but I was only an effete and depraved alien Britisher, with no rights in heaven, or earth, or the waters which rolled underfoot.

But the City Marshal was also a witness to these matters, and he it was who moved the Vigilance Committee to a wide-sweeping movement against such crooks, thieves, deadbeats, and desperadoes as were not holders of property.

It was quite time, for on the average seven persons a night were clubbed in the streets, or drugged in the brothels and robbed—indeed, one went abroad after dusk with a revolver in the side-pocket and forefinger ready on the trigger. So one day the leading citizens

gathered in twenty-five prominent criminals, and herded them down the gulch. All who ventured back were to be riddled at sight, and those few who argued were promptly thrown into the river. For the rest of the day there was but one salutation in the streets: "Where did you hide?"

Long Shorty went like a lamb, and all seemed well with the world. Then came the Baring crash in London, which smashed all our local banks. Half our population fled from the disaster-stricken town, my profits went down to sixteen cents a day, and I was constrained to fill up gaps in my system with a stick of candy for breakfast and a cigar for lunch.

To go back a few paces:

During my summer in Kootenay I had encountered the Little Blackguard, a swarthy Cornish miner. He, being very drunk, and mysteriously furtive, desired a business interview. Once settled down in my tent with a cigar he seemed not quite so drunk, but more furtively mysterious than ever. I was, he protested, the smartest man in the camp. Why so? Because I talked such infernal rot about mining that I completely disguised my real and genuine knowledge. This was very smart, also the prospector's dress, a

capital imitation—in fact, nobody had seen through me except himself. Of course I was the expert representing some huge English syndicate. At my denials he winked with gravity. He had a business proposition to make.

"Is it honest?"

"Sir, itsh a business proposition."

"But honest?"

"Sir, it is a legitimate businesh prop's'hon."

"Honest?"

"Shir, I tell yew itsh a puffeckly l'git'mit bushinesh prop'op's'hon."

"I see."

He never broached the proposition, and that night skipped the country, pursued.

I was still at the height of my brief prosperity in the Cœur d'Alene, when, boarding a local train, I met the Little Blackguard, who at once greeted me as the man who was much too honest to live. Yes, he would tell me the nature of that mysterious and furtive affair. He had been sent by a Smelting Company as expert to report on the Queen Victoria copper claims, and his first move won, for the Noble Five who owned them, a handsome "option" in cash. His

private conviction was that their great crag of copper ore on the mountain-side was worth about ten cents. Anyway, his employers of the Smelting Company nibbled, but failed to bite, so, with a view to waking them up, the Little Blackguard came to me with a proposition. I was to be a bogus expert, and make a bogus purchase of the copper claims. This "straw bond" he would palm off on the Smelting Company for twenty thousand dollars, and we were then to divide the plunder.

His rascality set me thinking.

"Where are you bound for?" I asked.

"The Gem Mine. I'm going to start a saloon."

"Do you know you're an infernal blackguard?"

"That's no dream," he said gravely.

"Will you make it a general store," I went on, "and come into partnership with me?"

"You wouldn't trust me?"

"Sonny, you're blackguard enough to deal with these Gem miners." I did not think him smart enough to cheat me.

"I'll go you, partner," said he.

I must revert here to my liability to be mistaken for something dangerous, a spy, for instance, or a

mining shark. As a special correspondent I was once in course of a single day mistaken for a cowboy, a doctor, a farm hand, and a prospector. I have been identified as Lefroy, the murderer, and Swiftwater Bill, the desperado. Once I was caught spying in a Russian fortress, and only escaped Siberia by passing myself off as a lunatic. I *was* spying, but I passed very well indeed as a lunatic. In London I was once cheered for a Royal Highness, and in Wallace I was known to be the outlaw who had lately in Montana, single-handed, stopped and robbed an express train. That reputation at the Gem Mine, coupled with the peculiar furtiveness of my new partner, would make a fine business combination. The whole Cœur d'Alene was famed for cowardly ruffianism, but the Gem miners were so much the worst, that all my repute as an outlaw, and all the Little Blackguard's watchfulness, scarce made it safe to locate in their town for business.

The mine Management had a general store noted for extortion, and any miner who bought his goods elsewhere lost his job by way of punishment. Naturally the Miners' Union was incensed, and any men who dared to set up a rival business would get the

whole of their trade in defiance of the Management. Then either the Miners' Union store must be destroyed, or the mine closed for lack of hands. Two merchants of Wallace had offered me plenty of capital if I would open a general store at Gem. Before the train made that three-mile journey my partner had promised to become a member of the Gem Union, and introduce my proposals to the miners. A long, eager nose was once more pulling me into trouble.

In the evening I waited, kicking my heels in a saloon until nearly midnight, before the Little Blackguard came out from the Gem Union meeting. There were graver affairs than mine discussed that night. A strike conspiracy was organized, which two years later flamed out into civil war. Knowing nothing of that, I was wonder-struck when at last my partner re-entered the saloon, ashen-white, trembling all over. He could not, dared not explain, but had mentioned my business to two gentlemen who would presently wait upon me. Indeed, while we were still talking, two miners strolled into the saloon dressed in the usual pea-jackets, slouch hats, and long boots. "This," said my partner, presenting me, "is the man who's too honest to live."

I laughed as I shook hands. "This," I responded

cheerfully, "is the gentleman who got run out of Kootenay."

The Little Blackguard chuckled at the compliment. Not so the two gentlemen. I had insulted their "friend," and, turning on their heels, they walked off, declining my acquaintance. "There now," said my partner, "you've done it! You've insulted the President and Secretary of the Miners' Union."

So I went back to my bridge at Wallace, and the whole proposal fell to the ground—a scheme which would have involved me in an atrocious conspiracy. Two years later these gentlemen and their followers captured the twelve managing officers of the Gem Mine, herded them, shackled, through the gulch, took them to a lonely place, and there shot them down in cold blood. One man, badly wounded, escaped by swimming the river and hiding in the woods. So began the Reign of Terror of 1892, so grave a business that United States troops had to surround the Cœur d'Alene District before they could put a stop to the butchery.

Miners of silver, caterers to supply their needs, parasites preying on their vices; these, in perhaps equal numbers, peopled the six towns of Cœur d'Alene.

And this district had its being under the Laws of the United States, which are the Laws of the English seven times purified. The French-Indian voyageurs of old-time Canada discovered this lake and river in the remotest fastnesses of the Continent, and named them Cœur d'Alene. Now the law, seven times illumined with a rainbow glory, fell softly as rain upon this Heart of a Flint, and made not the slightest impression. Copious rain of the law, drought of obedience, that is the mournful issue in many parts of the Republic.

During my hibernating after the collapse of the town of Wallace, when I had little to live on and sucked my paws like a bear, my friends with one voice begged me to accept a United States citizenship. What manner of citizenship would it be? One had to judge of that from current examples. For instance, a leading citizen, with a large, floppy necktie and agreeable manners at church socials, had for partner a livery-stable keeper, and for property, among other things, an empty piece of land up the gulch. This tract was called the Y, and the Leading Citizen had no title to it except his broken-down fence. It was not his land by law. But there came an old

man with his son, who, prompted by a prominent desperado, saw fit to jump the Y and build a cabin thereon. The Leading Citizen got his partner to aid, went up to the Y, and found the old man and his son hard at work. He began by shooting the old man and clubbing the son. Badly wounded, and desperate over the seeming death of his boy, the father fought both assailants with a lion courage. He got one bullet into the Livery man before the Leading Citizen of the floppy necktie and the agreeable manners inflicted four more wounds, all of them mortal. So the old man lay by the unfinished cabin, his white hair bloody, his face to heaven, dead, victim of deliberate willful murder. I happened to be passing, and joined the crowd of men which gathered silent about the body, when the Coroner appeared on the scene. "Well," said the Coroner, kicking the murdered man, "he's dead anyway." The crowd laughed.

Two hours afterwards I strolled into the magistrate's office, where the murderer and the Judge, the Livery man and the witnesses, were sitting round the stove, spitting reflectively on its hot cylinder. The murderer was relating his recent experience blandly, as one might recount details of some church social.

An hour later that Leading Citizen was at large, doing his usual business, and was not thereafter disturbed by any formalities of the law. Should I be honored by an American citizenship? There was no justice within the scope of the law, but yet, outside of official machinery, there might be at least fair play.

A miner came down from the hills. He owned a town lot which had been swept bare in the burning of Wallace, and, having saved sufficient money, proposed to renew the fence. No protection of law had saved his land from being stolen by a couple of Germans, who had built their cabin on the lot. To oust those Germans by law he would have to bribe the authorities, and, perhaps, be driven from court to court, appealing until he was beggared. He went to the Vigilance Committee, which, being an unlawful body, descended on those Germans like a whirlwind, pitched them into a pond, tore the cabin down, and scattered the remnants over the public streets.

There were, then, some rudiments of fair play despite the Laws? That hope was very soon shattered. A Railway Company, lacking sufficient space for their yards, sent men in the dead of the night and jumped one of the main thoroughfares of the town. In the

morning the people found their street stolen, occupied throughout by a railroad siding. Led by a saloon-keeper, who presented a keg of whisky for refreshments, the people assembled, wrecked a freight car across the line, and began to tear up the track. The Railway Company brought forward a train bearing three hundred men armed with rifles, but these, kept out of range by the wrecked truck, had to retire. By evening the people had cleared the street for traffic. Before next morning the track had been renewed, and was covered with heavy trains impossible to displace. Then the people realized that the merchants of the street had been squared by the railway thieves. Those merchants were members of the Committee of Public Safety, the only hope of fair play left for men in trouble.

My friends were grave in their warnings: "You'd better take citizenship."

"I have taken the special military and civil oaths in Her Majesty's service."

"Oh, that's all right! Renounce them, you've got to, anyway, or you can't be a citizen here."

"What a noble thing to have at the mere cost of perjury!"

"Well, there are fees, too."

"And this perjured oath is good enough? Perjury is a felony. What a wide net you spread to get proselytes!"

"Oh, we don't want you! It's for your sake. Why, you don't belong to any secret societies, you've got no political friends, no money, you've had three gun troubles here already. What if you kill a man? Why, they'll make an example of you!"

"I see. By committing perjury I get a license to murder. What a citizenship!"

Oh, but I expected too much. I must not be so bigoted. This Republic was immense, not hedged like my native parish, effete, sluggish, unprogressive.

My native parish is wider than all the seas, and higher than the clouds; her ensign is a Holy Calvary whereon three crosses shine for Justice, for Mercy, for Good Faith. That freedom, that discipline, had spoiled me for Liberty, Equality, Fraternity—and no God to worship.

That was all rot! Couldn't I talk like a practical man? This Republic was a big, wild country, but not yet settled down.

Canada was a bigger, wilder country, where men went safe without a weapon, where aliens had human rights, where Judges were not bribed, Legislators not of the criminal classes, and honesty was not become effete. Canada had spoiled me, made me accustomed to deal with honorable men, healthy and clean, a sterling coinage of manhood, not crumpled rags. Already I had tested the methods of American "smartness," fouled my honor, pitched the filth aside, and washed my hands, disgusted. When that small change has all been discredited, the "word of an Englishman" will still be taken at par on the world's counters.

It was a decided nuisance being an alien with no rights to worry me, beggared gradually by the people's enmity towards everything English. The necessity of holding one's own with a revolver is specially obnoxious to a bad marksman, and most Britishers find the American code of dueling—kill at sight—rather too brusque to appeal to our sense of sport. For instance, a bad man robbed me, and was so extremely rude about it that I had to take notice. Living under an anarchy, possessed of no human rights, one has to take notice in person, and I was

too badly crippled to punch the gentleman's head. There remained the duel, so I got an Englishman from the Tiger Mine to act as my second. He lent me his revolver, but as we walked down to the scene of the trouble there arose the question of cartridges. I hesitated. "Could you use cartridges on—that sort of man? Dueling's pretty low down—but to kill—I couldn't do it."

"Well," he scratched his ear; "if it were me—— Why, you couldn't show up at Home—in your club, say—and admit having killed men that way! One must draw the line somewhere."

So we came to the gentleman, and I asked him pointedly for his apology. He had an ax. For a long moment I watched his slow eye travel round from chamber to chamber of the empty cylinder of my gun, then glitter as his glance bored up towards mine along the sights, with perfect understanding. Then droping the ax, he let me off with two black eyes and a bloody nose, a generous "satisfaction" which confirmed my distaste for the odious practice of dueling. The biggest thing I ever killed was a lame crow, and I would prefer a dozen thrashings to the afterthoughts of a murderer.

When the spring came, the "Man on the Bridge" was having a rather bad time. What business remained was on credit, candy for breakfast, a cigar for luncheon, and of several customers only one paid up. She was a Sister of Sorrow, worn out, in rags, dying. Many a night, hungry for a kind word, she would come, braving the bitter cold upon the bridge to smoke a cigarette, and stand at my window sulky, half defiant, while we gossiped. The men chaffed her roughly, the "good" women passed by sniffing on the other side of the way, the black gales drenched her with sleet, the river grumbled on ice and bowlders below.

For long she had kept her "man," her tough she called him, but now that she was dying, her purse failed his needs, he deserted her, moving to another town down the gulch. Word came to her of him—he was shot in a gun-fight, and then she sold her bed, her cabin, all that was left, to pay for his funeral.

From my place on the bridge I looked out day after day, week after week, for her return; at night, thinking I heard her footstep, I would get up to peer through the windows; but the winter broke, the trees

budded, the river rolled ice and bowlders with the spring floods, and she came back no more. Bowlders and ice—I wonder still at times—waters raging for the sea—had she found her rest with them down towards the sea—rest from her sorrow?

XIII

THE TRAIL OF THE DISCOURAGED

THE summer came, and by coach, by train, or afoot I wandered for months through settlements of farmers in Idaho, Washington, and Oregon, the three realms of the Columbia valley. I lived by painting photographs, sometimes by lecturing, never much in demand, but keeping more or less alive. Sympathetic acquaintances would often tell me that they set aside the general theory of my being a lunatic, but would like to know why I did not settle down and get rich.

"Settle down?" The words vaguely suggested to me pleasures of social intercourse, of thought, letters, the arts, of athletic exercise, of bathing. For such peculiarities they would have lodged me in the county asylum. "Get rich?" The political and business methods of the country were not alluring. I could not explain, it would be rude, and the sympathetic

acquaintance would walk away, thoughtfully tapping his forehead.

So I went blundering on, hoping to keep alive through this semi-civilized and admired region until I could come once more to people who would regard me as human, outcasts like me, frontiersmen.

We English were savages once, ten thousand years ago—don't you remember? We tracked the Mammoth north to the skirts of the ice, trapped them where they fed in the swamps, followed them southward in the autumn, lighted our winter fire upon the tribal camp-ground, and when rival tribes got in our way there was slaying. The old spirit moves us to migrate, we burn still with untamable, inextinguishable savagery, abhorring floor, walls, and roof—the entire house of civilized restraint. We ask, we adventurers, the earth for our bed, the stars for our clock, the morning chill for our reveillé, the ends of the earth for our portion, and in the path of our world-grabbing savagery the shuttles of Fate are weaving the fabric of Empire.

Of all the trails I must not leave out that of the Discouraged, but will make it quite short.

Wandering southward in quest of the Wilderness,

leaving a track of pawned baggage, I came at last to a town where, from bitter experience, the hotel men demanded cash in advance from strangers. Nobody wanted to be lectured, nobody cared for painted photographs, there was no employment offered, and the streets were dangerously infested with tramps. Just beyond lay the Wilderness, if I could only win there.

It was very hot, indeed the thermometers were demoralized, recording hysterically anything up to 106° before they burst; and for three days I was out hunting for work, any kind of work. On the third day I had a bad fainting-fit, and in the afternoon, while talking business with a citizen, broke down and cried like a coward. I don't know why, but vaguely remember resenting the length of his beard. I was past hunger, getting very weak. Ten years I had earned my bread, now at the age of twenty-five my hair had begun to turn gray, and I was tired. There are indeed tides in the affairs of men, and this was the end of the ebb, the dead slack. Had there been no change I suppose I should have taken to drink. The Trail of the Discouraged passes into that gate, and those who enter there leave Hope behind.

The citizen of the long beard lent me a quarter for

food. Then the tide stirred, which soon was to begin rising, and is now in full flood.

That evening I called on a local editor, to whom I offered my services as special correspondent. He read steadily while I laid proposals before him, snapped out some words of disgust at the clients of his journal, and went on reading. In a monotonous voice I condoled with him for having such clients, with the subscribers who suffered such an editor. I left him still reading. Next day I sent the local banker to condole with him for having missed the chance of getting me.

"Wilkins the Printer"; so read the signboard over a shanty, and within I discovered the printer, the printer's devil, and the editor of a forlorn little weekly paper. It was such a very little paper that two hundred copies would make a proud edition; and the subscribers were people who could have paid up in bear meat or potatoes much easier than with cash.

"Please" would I sit down? How strange it sounded, that sweet word of courtesy! The tramp sat down with a gulp of astonishment. "Why, thanks!" Then, turning to the Editor: "From

New England, I think?" "Boston," he answered, smiling. I had not met a gentleman for so long. "Do you take an interest in such things as mere subscribers? Yes? You must be eccentric journalists! I want you to send a man to visit them in the Wilderness, to put their names in the paper, and praise their lone fight with difficulties, to place their needs on record, their hopes, their ventures, to tell the public of chances for making money, of investments for capital. I want to win you new subscribers, to move the reticent who have not paid arrears. Will you send me as your special correspondent?"

Those rare men had the courage to engage a special correspondent for a paper with two hundred subscribers, and it is pleasant to remember editions of five thousand copies brought within the range of their enterprise. The rival paper gnashed its teeth over those issues.

We bought a horse, an Old Gentleman, white with the ashes of extinct vices, tired of life, but still much annoyed by a sore back. We had a saddle made to suit this last infirmity of a noble ruin, and I carried a bag of salt to heal the sores. Then the Old Gentleman slouched off with me into the Wilderness. We

climbed out of the heat into forest whose cool glades seemed like enchanted waters wholly made of perfume, whose coral-red trunks went up into wavy green, whose brown floor of pine-needles floated off into swaths of anemones, while the Old Gentleman and I played at being mermaids, the jeweled hummingbirds our escort, and the air about us was thrilled with bird songs of tireless ecstasy.

Down in the valleys the women were so rich that they lay on couches, their very skin like gold—yellow, and wan children gasped complaints in the sweltering verandas. Here on the hills the people were poor; ruddy, winsome mothers, children bursting with health and mischief, men who could not let a stranger pass without boasting to him of glorious things in the future. And on beyond the settlements, by winding trails, we climbed to the alps above, the meadows between timber line and the snow, pastures of heaven starred with constellations of flowers.

We scrambled along edges of the cliffs whose bases were hid in cloud, over stern wastes of rock and drifted snow, even to those last high crags, glazed by the lightning, where mortal summits brave the immortal

sky, and earthly brows are touched by the fingers of God. Holy and beautiful are those hills, and there was given me salt to harden my sores.

The cowboys rode miles to show me the way, prospectors took offense unless I stayed over night, sheepherders were slighted if a leg of mutton proved too much for my supper. The Old Gentleman took me from the white crests into purple-red, fiery-heated canyons, where down in the bases of the world the rattlesnakes lay drowsily hoping for incautious flies. I was prospecting for mercury and for opals, and found men opening lead mines under the foundations of the lava.

Among the high summits I came one day to a mine which had been manipulated by London financiers, for the robbing of widows and orphans. The closing of this good mine had ruined the reputation of the district, and the gentleman now in possession lived alone, a hermit among big ruins. He led me into the tunnels, walking gingerly under timbering, rotten, bending inwards, from whence white hands of fungus reached at us. To balance myself I had set my little finger against a beam, when, looking back, my guide cried in a tense whisper:

"For God's sake, don't!" He was pale, sweat-shaken, because I had touched that beam, and not daring even to whisper any more, we went on climbing over débris where the roof had fallen, until we came to a winze leading down to the lower works. Before venturing farther we lowered a candle into this hole and the light went out. The breath of life would have gone out if we had entered there. And now we heard behind us a distant crash with long-resounding echoes. Had the whole tunnel collapsed? Were we prisoners? We dared not run, but crept down the long gallery where white hands seemed to reach at our throats. At last we could see the entry, where there should have been daylight, only to find black darkness. Then the darkness was lighted by an instant blue glare, followed by a deafening peal of thunder. The night had fallen, a storm was raging since we had entered the mine, and we came reeling out of the tunnel, inwardly thanking Heaven that we were not entombed. At the entrance we were deafened, blinded, stunned by the mountain storm which blasted a tree upon the slopes below us, and seemed to shake the ground on which we stood. Only while the lightning blazed could we see our way, halting be-

tween the flashes, in utter darkness, until we gained the shelter of the house.

It was at the foot of this mountain that I came next day to Granite, a town of three people, hotel-keeper, saloonkeeper, and storekeeper, the other twenty-six being absent cutting a new trail. I had been fed, and was inquiring for Greenhorn Mountain, when a young man rode up to the saloon armed with rifle, revolver, bowie-knife, and a black scowl. He was bound, he told me, towards Greenhorn Mountain, and would just buy a bottle of pickles and one of whisky before starting. With my last dollar I conformed to etiquette by providing a bottle of whisky for myself, then, as we rode off, Scowl opened his quart of pickles, and used his bowie for a fork. When he had eaten the last pickle, he remarked that he was camp-tender to three flocks of sheep, and that his whisky was for number two herder. My whisky being disengaged, I drew the cork. He drank at length, but when my turn came my tongue stopped the neck of the bottle—my friend carried too much artillery. His second and third drinks were copious, mine a delusion.

"Partner," said he, "you mistrust me."

"I'll show you how much," said I, taking a real drink.

We were riding through bull-pine forest in the gloaming, and in all I had three mouthfuls of that wonderful liquor before it knocked me out of the saddle. When I recovered consciousness, I found myself on the flat of my back alone under the stars, wondering who I was, and where I came from, but presently feeling cougars close by me, got up and made a fire. So I lay listening to the great cats singing, while the stars wheeled through their course, and in the break of dawn saw Mr. Scowl searching the woods for me. He came at my call, explaining that I had been dragged by one foot from the stirrup, and he too drunk to rescue me from almost certain death. Our horses were lost, but he would track them down, and I must wait for him in the sheep camp close at hand.

All through the morning I sat in the sheep camp with the herder, and at noon Mr. Scowl came back afoot, reporting his tracking a failure. Convinced that he had robbed me, I sat sulking by the campfire through the afternoon, but at dusk Scowl rode into camp triumphantly drunk, leading my horse. After

supper we hit the trail, leading seven mules, tied head and tail, on the way to number three sheep camp, and through many weary hours went stumbling onward through the pitch-black woods, over mire, roots, deadfall, thorn, and underbrush, until at two in the morning we came out upon clear ground. Scowl's scouting had been wonderful, his progress festive, and his joyousness was unabated at the sight of four small fires along the ridge ahead.

"To keep off cougars," he explained in whispers. "My herder here's the biggest coward west of the Rockies, and I'm going to scare his soul out. You just hark!"

He purred like a cat, his clear voice lifting slowly, easily, to the grand sustained battle-cry of a nine-foot cougar. A flash of light blazed out from between the guard fires, a bullet came whizzing between us, and I coughed.

"You're scared!" said my friend derisively, and we rode on into the camp. We ate half a sheep between us, then slept, and in the morning I went on, rather glad to be alone in the big woods, scouting for Greenhorn Mountain.

I might tell many tales of wonderful gold-mines

and strange breeds of men, but pleasantest of all to remember were the several nights when, lost in the forest, I would light my fire of pine-cones, hobble the Old Gentleman, and listen for hours to the love-songs, the war-chants, the triumph-pæans of the cougars. Their eyes glowed green and flame when they crept near, smelling up wind to find out if I were injurious, then they would go away into the shadows and purr to say they were pleased. Of course, had I been a sheep, I might have felt prejudice, or were I a hunter, been excited by lithe nine-foot cats within such easy range; but I only felt like a trespasser on their preserves. The cougars might have had the Old Gentleman, but seeing him too thin even to cast a shadow, were perhaps fastidious. So I would sleep until that evil-minded vagrant tried to desert, then, missing the clank of his hobbles, wake up and chase him home. He had his two-hours' nap just before dawn, and thought me a decided drawback when—clear canary light shining between black trees—I saddled him once more to lope off questing for a breakfast.

The work was done, I was on the home-trail, riding slowly through the ripe wheat of the outermost set-

tlement, and I thought the Old Gentleman must be dying. His back was quite healed, and with no grievance left to live for, he had resolved to pass away into cats'-meat of doubtful quality, when a lad well mounted joined us out of the wheatfields. We swung abreast and made friends, the young horse promptly challenging the old to a scamper. The Old Gentleman shyly resisted, longing to show off, afraid for his reputation as an invalid. Distant smoke had appeared, chimneys ahead, a wooden spire—he knew that place, had been there before! He snuffled, pointed his ears, winked at the young horse, damned his repute as an invalid, kicked up his heels, and broke for that village at full gallop. We rolled in with high tails through the dust, and reined hard in the village street just as a smart team of bays drew up by the little hotel. Surely I knew that man in the buggy—the local banker from town?

"Hello!" he cried, "well met! We've had no news of you for three weeks—thought the cougars had got you—going to send out a search party. So you're safe, and homeward bound!"

"Bringing my sheaves with me."

"Why, our town's just crazy about you. All sorts

of cablegrams for you from England, money in my bank for you from London—your luck's changed with a vengeance! Com'n-'av-a-drink!"

Fifty-five ringing miles down through the forests, and out on the lava plains, brought the Old Fraud, frisky with renewed youth, back to the place where his withers had been torn raw, back home to town. With a yell I reined before the shanty, and out came Wilkins the Printer, the human editor, and the printer's devil, to my immense relief all quite in good health, after what seemed like years and years since I left them. Yes, there were sheaves of subscriptions, reams of copy, and another month's work in the farming districts would make my campaign complete. Oh, but there were telegrams, letters, money in the bank, all sorts of things!

Let me skip that last month and come to the point when the Printer, the Editor, and the Devil got rid of me for good. By the telegrams, the letters, and the money in the bank, it appeared that an old book published some years ago had been approved by a mighty critic in London, that two short stories had been accepted by some Olympian editor, and that I was called home to a country where writers are not

always starved. A trade at last, the glory of craftsmanship, my life's ambition realized. I should tread no more the Trail of the Discouraged, take my discharge from the dusty ranks of the Lost Legion.

A sorry-looking wayfarer, with ragged overalls, long boots, clanking, rusty spurs, a red cotton handkerchief loose round the neck, a lean, bronzed face half hid by a drooping sombrero, I rode for the last time through the town and said good-by to the Old Fraud at his home stable. Then I took off the spurs. So, in the devious manner of my tribe, taking in all possible scenery and discomforts upon the way, the Frontier all behind, the World ahead, I drifted gradually—Home.

XIV

THE TRAIL OF THE CARGADOR

BACK in London again, I tried to rest contented by the fireside, praying for trouble, miserable at being left out of the Klondike rush. Two chums shared chambers with me in Great Ormond Street. H—— mourned for his old saddle on the Frontier, and pretended to read for the Bar. Mr. M—— had lately been captured with a shipload of arms, at war with the Chinese Empire, and, sorely grieved at having missed a throne, was writing novels. Other fellows used to drop in for hot whisky and a pipe, who yarned of ivory raids beyond the Congo, of golden beaches in Patagonia, trading with cannibal blacks in North Australia, gun-running in Morocco, warships bought for mysterious foreigners, or smuggling liquor up near Hudson's Bay. London is Headquarters for the Lost Legion.

One night, as we plotted mischief by the fire, I broached plans for an Expedition, inventing as I went on, amid a storm of derision. To make the sequel

clear I must give these plans. In a previous chapter I have mentioned that in the days before the success of Atlantic cables, an Overland Telegraph was projected between New York and St. Petersburg. Twenty-two years after that enterprise was abandoned a pack-train of mules left the Canadian Pacific Railway at Ashcroft, B. C., and followed the old Telegraph trail to the Skeena River. This was in 1889, just after I left my Mission on the Skeena, and my pious Gaetkshians got up on their hind-legs for war against mules and drivers. They plundered that pack-train.

Still, my old parishioners would not eat me; the trail, much overgrown, and cumbered with telegraph wire, had grass enough for a couple of pack-trains a year, and a Gaetkshian guide would show me the way to the Stickeen River. From Ashcroft to Telegraph Creek on the Stickeen would be one thousand miles.

Now it was only another seven hundred and fifty miles on from the Stickeen to the Klondike. The Canadian Government was pledged to start a service of steamers up the Stickeen from the sea, a railway thence to Teslin Lake, the main source of the Yukon,

and another service of steamers down the Yukon to Dawson City. This all-Canadian route to the Klondike meant a demand for horses. A pack-animal costing twenty dollars at Ashcroft would sell for two hundred dollars on the Stickeen, or, better still, could earn forty cents a pound on cargo carried thence to the Yukon. My plan then was to take a pack-train across the one-thousand-mile trail, have eighteen months' provisions waiting at the Stickeen, and there set up a base camp. Half the expedition could then earn wealth as packers, while the other half went exploring the rivers for gold. It still looks nice on paper.

I had five dollars by way of capital for this venture, and though my chums wanted it for a dinner to celebrate the idea, the money went at once into business.

"Experienced Western Traveler" advertised in the *Times*, offering to lead a Klondike Expedition. In Europe that announcement would have seemed like the freak of a maniac, in England there were sixty-three replies. To each applicant I explained that he had no earthly chance of getting rich, but would be overworked, drenched, possibly starved, as a laborer, navvy, and scullion, and for these interest-

ing experiences must pay twelve hundred and fifty dollars, cash down in advance. Eight men accepted these conditions. "He was a most sarcastic man," said one of them afterwards, describing me in print; "very bright, although I firmly believe from his actions that he was a half-lunatic." Quite so, for an eager nose was once more luring a weak chin into most grievous trouble. My beautiful plans made no provision for a margin of disaster. The spring was to come a month late—ruin before we could march; the same scheme had attracted three thousand men with seven thousand horses—the route eaten bare of all save poison weeds, and tramped into a thousand-mile mud-hole; and the Canadian Government, foully breaking faith, was to abandon the Overland way, leaving us all to starve.

I was suffering from swollen head, remembering my experience in twenty-eight trades, but forgetting that I had never learned one of them. So in the devout belief that I was fit for leadership, I guided better men than myself, paving their Hell with my good intentions while I led them blindfolded into the Ashcroft Horror.

On the 25th of January, 1898, we organized the Ex-

pedition, meeting at my rooms in town, all strangers, polite, stiff, and suspicious, after the English way. We were very formal indeed—had not found each other out; but there were solicitors with top-hats, also whisky, soda, and cigarettes, so that everything was legal and proper. At these rites I presented H——, my second in command, as horse-wrangler.

A fortnight later he and I, happy as schoolboys at being in the saddle once more, rode out from the little town of Ashcroft in British Columbia. Very far away was that London life—two cowboys on a winter trail in the bush; but the Englishman is the only animal alive who with a shift of clothes can change from the entirely civilized to the wholly savage without any sense of strangeness. Our way led north up a thirty-mile hill, and then seventy miles through the deep snows of the Northern Forest. The cold was piercing, with most shrewd storms, but along that coach-road to the Cariboo Mines there are rest-houses at intervals, big log-buildings, where it is the custom to offer a drink, and the warmest corner by the stove, to every traveler. There we were among frontiersmen who talked horse, and we were in touch with market prices.

The Klondike rush had nearly stripped the Plains, but horse-dealers far off in the forest were glad to sell. Fine stock they offered, fifteen hands in height, ten hundred-weight or more, wild bronchos from blooded sires at twenty dollars a head. Unhappily these forest-bred horses proved soft; and desert stock would have served us better in the terrible time that was coming. When we had hired a pair of horse-breakers we drove our herd down to Hat Creek, thirteen miles above Ashcroft, and there set up our first camp. Renting a pasture and corral, we set to work horse-smashing, and that was a big job, lasting a month. Mature and entirely wild horses will "pitch" until they are half dead, throw themselves over cliffs, and fight with desperation before they are conquered; indeed with one mare my chum failed, for after throwing herself four times on the level and thrice over the cut bank of a river, she cricked her neck and died of a broken heart.

In time the last horses were ridden, packed, branded, shod, and accustomed to human society, while I was busy with the commissariat, the cooking, and the beastly accounts, much traveling, and sore misgivings, for we were living under canvas, the

temperature still ten degrees below zero every night, and daily our wonder and horror grew at a thing beyond experience. The winter should have ended long ago, flowers should have blossomed beside the melting drifts, the buds should have been fat on every twig, but still the land lay ice-bound. When we took down saddle-horses to meet our crowd from England, it was within three days of the date fixed for marching; but there was ice in the creeks, snow on the hills, frost tingling in the air. And the horses were failing. Sick with apprehension, we watched them starve on hay at twenty-five dollars a ton—lapsing into scarecrows for lack of the sweet young grass. Breaking is bad for a horse, but breaking on dry feed is terrible, and one day my pet black saddle-beast fell mortal sick from under me—Pestilence in the herd! I had been busy breaking the crowd to camp work, but when the Strangles appeared, we struck our camp, grass or no grass, and fled. We struck out across the heights of the forest, leaving a dead horse at nearly every camp, afraid to march, afraid to stay, spending the last of our reserve fund on rotten hay at forty-five dollars a ton.

On the sixteenth day, far in the forest, we dropped

down a little by-trail into paradise—a bench in the tremendous abyss of the Fraser River. Cliffs thousands of feet aloft shut out the world, and the torrent roared below. The grass was already a foot high, all starred with big marigolds, a crystal spring bubbled beside our tents, and no footstep of man for months had disturbed the deer. A stallion ranging about with his harem captured all our mares; the geldings, apart by themselves, played hide-and-seek with our reliefs of herders; and all our sorrowful herd, convalescent, hourly gaining in strength, whisked their long tails, snorted at the very sight of man, and lapsed to wild beasts in a week.

Leaving our camp of rest, we attempted to drive the herd across Fraser River, but, several breaking away over the mountains, were obliged to detach a search party. Then we towed the animals across, making them swim behind a scow, and one mare drowned herself out of spite. Beyond that the country was mountainous along the western bank, with nice crags to fall off, plenty of grass, and not too much of a trail. With an ideal pack-train of tame mules, who follow a bell mare with devoted attachment, it needs no labor of a morning to find and

bring in the herd. Each mule walks up to her own private harness and load, then stands at attention like an old soldier, preparing groans of protest against the time of her toilette. But ours was not an ideal pack-train.

The "rigging" is most complex, its proper handling a profession. First comes the sweat-pad, which is an empty sack to collect the molted hair and juices of exercise. Over that is laid a large double blanket, folded curiously to relieve any bruises on the skin. These blankets form the cargador's bedding at night. Third comes the *corona*, a strip of carpet to prevent the harness from sliding. Fourth comes the *apparejo*, which is a pair of leather cushions ribbed with sticks, stuffed with swamp grass, and specially fitted to the animal—who is most particular on the subject. To this *apparejo* is attached a crupper passed round the rump, partly to steady the pack downhill, mainly to aggravate the animal and chasten unseemly pride. Fifth comes the *sovran helmo*, a bit of canvas stiffened at the sides, which keeps the cargo from sliding. Sixth is the cargo itself, a package for either flank, each lashed up with a luff-tackle purchase, and the two loosely hung with a short sling

rope so as to balance perfectly. On top is piled the odd gear, and over all is spread the *manta*, a canvas rainproof cover, which makes the cargador's tent when it can be spared from sheltering the equipage. Last comes the lash-rope, making the load fast to the animal with a subtle purchase called the diamond hitch. One deft twitch and a wrench will displace that lashing, but a fractious animal may buck himself sick before it begins to come loose. When the pack-train is ready to march the cook rides ahead, leading the bell mare, who carries the kitchen in a pair of chests. The captain of the outfit scouts ahead searching for pasturage and camp grounds, or, when at liberty, helps the *cargadors* and *arrieros*. These, the crew, ride in pairs with the procession, ready to relash loose packs, and, when the animals tire, to keep them from straying. This is not only endless and most exhausting work, but in the forest one needs both nerve and "shaps" (leg armor) to gallop headlong into jungle after the self-effacing "Squattles," the eruptive "Sarah," or that malingerer "Jones." The custom is to march at cocklight and camp at noon, giving the horse-wrangler a chance to fatten and rest his herd; but with a broncho outfit such as

ours, many beautiful traditions are most rudely breached. We had to build a ring fence at each camp wherein to trap and catch the horses, provided they were not all lost overnight in jungle impenetrable to man.

Our convalescents bucked, bit, struck, kicked, balked, bolted, mired, drowned, broke their silly necks, kicked their packs into pieces, and never failed to behave with surprising aplomb. As to the outfits of tame mules which we so envied, the wet forest wiped them out in a month. Not one mule survived the first five hundred miles.

At Quesnelle, the jumping-off place at the edge of the Frontier, we swung into the Telegraph trail, a string of mud-holes walled with bush, crowded with thousands of people all pressing northward in grim silence. What with the starvation of their animals, sore backs, stray horses, squabbles, bankruptcy, and endless rain, most of the pack-trains were just on the verge of collapse. We were near the end of our own resources, and had barely funds enough to reprovision. I knew already that by the delay of the spring we were a month too late for effective work in the north, that this overcrowded trail would become the

scene of a ghastly tragedy, and that the Canadian Government had blandly left us to our fate. Perhaps it was criminal to keep these pleasant secrets for my own private consumption. I knew we were ruined; but, run away? I would rather have shot myself.

And indeed only cowardice could have prompted our flight. On that tragic march the horses of our Star Brand won us the respect of all frontiersmen. There was no expedition so sumptuously furnished, so well provisioned, or with such an effective base camp as we had waiting us in the north.

Only a tenderfoot crowd, we already rivaled the old-hand cargadors in our loading, tracking, and camp work; and the wonderful English sense of discipline kept us free from the squabbles which marred many rival companies. I had just reason for pride in the Star Outfit, well capable of fighting through to the Stickeen. We had thirty-five horses left, and to say the least were no worse off than the most fortunate of our neighbors. The only thing wrong with the Star Outfit was my unfortunate leadership; I had splashed too recklessly with the funds, I had—rather the other fellows confessed the remainder of my sins. Only

three of them hated me with any degree of desperation.

I was being tested. One day I rode at the head of the train leading the bell mare, and our way swept down a hill into the Blackwater valley. The river, sunk below the meadows in a little canyon, roared between sheer walls with deafening thunder, and across the gap some logs had been thrown, forming a bridge. My fool mare, objecting to the place, jumped under stress of hard spurring half-way across, then lost her head altogether, and backed off the edge of the bridge. She was such a fool that she actually missed the river and tumbled into a criss-cross of timbering which formed the rough abutment. I rolled out of the saddle, kicked her to show I was present, and hoisted her out. Incidentally I got a shrewd kick on my shin. But with this delay my partners were now bunched, waiting to cross the bridge, while our horses, terrified by the uproar of the waters and the shaking ground, were certain to stampede if we tried to halt. I must mount, and ride that fool across the bridge, or lose all claim to be a leader of men, but my legs trembled so that I could hardly stand, and a sudden nausea seized my inside. I led the two mares

across, knowing at last that I was unfit for command. This is the curse of the romantic temperament, that it goes to utter smash when put to the test.

Thence was to come much sorrow, and now I must speak of memories which still hurt, regarding an unfortunate gentleman whom Nature had not designed for any expedition by land.

A. C—— came of a naval family who must have hated horses from time immemorial. Of most engaging humor, chivalrous, and unselfish, C—— was a born sportsman, an enthusiast at mining, yet seemed only at home on the water. Therefore I was apt to be rude when our success, our very lives, depended upon learning horsemanship and woodcraft. But still he was patient with me, his dignity too fine and deep a thing to ruffle easily upon the surface, and I never guessed how sore he was at heart.

We marched through woods so dense that when we turned our herd loose to feed, we could only pray to our gods that by luck we should see them again. They had to stray far after grass. So to travel twenty miles we must work twenty hours a day, fortunate if we got the horses together by nine o'clock, caught and loaded by noon, released again to graze

before dusk. Our best saddle-horses were ridden to a finish, one had been ridden to death. All day we were tortured by black flies, all night by mosquitoes; indeed the poison from them had inflamed the glands of our necks, and engendered much evil in our tempers. The Overland route was indeed a school for men, but I thought the indignant gods were twisting our tails in the hope of educing a squeal.

After fording Mud River, we were compelled—ten horses astray in the willows—to lie in camp for a day. Apart from the horse-hunting we had harness to repair, and I did all the cooking. Indeed, bar twenty minutes for a bath, I had been at work since three in the morning, and night fell at nine o'clock while still there was much to do. C—— had been thinking all day, and when he offered to help me wash up after supper, I told him roughly to "go away and rest."

The words cut worse than a whip-lash across his face, words that could never be withdrawn, never forgiven. C—— was my partner, not my servant; and if I could not command myself, how should I lead? So I was weighed in the balance, was found wanting.

Next morning, it was the ninth day of June, I was very early at work, served breakfast, and got the

boys away to hunt the swamps for our horses. C—— would not eat in my company, but after breakfast I noticed him preparing his saddle and gear for the day's march. Then he lit his pipe, and as he walked past the fire I begged him to have some breakfast. Without noticing my presence he went on, and passed between two willow bushes out of sight.

Half an hour must have passed before the missing horses were driven into camp, and the recall signal fired, of three revolver-shots. All the rest of the morning we were busy catching, harnessing, and loading the pack animals, breaking camp, saddling; and it was only at noon, when I rode out as usual to scout ahead, that I began to be anxious about C——'s absence. Meeting a horseman who had come down the trail without seeing anything of C——, I rode back to place food and a letter by the campfire. I had intended a drive that day of sixteen miles, but camped the outfit at the tenth mile by Bobtail Lake, convinced that the man who had strayed would overtake us.

In the morning I sent back a man to fire shots up Mud River valley; at noon, hearing that C—— was not in the trail, I countermanded the marching orders

and sent back our two best horsemen to search; at 3 P. M. I sent back the doctor with a pack animal loaded with camp equipment and medical stores, to cook for the searchers; at dusk, with one other man, rode out into the deepening night very uneasy. We lay out at Lost Horse Meadows, five miles back, where on the morning of the 11th of June I organized a big search party from the pack-trains there in camp. By sunrise I was at Mud River, raising a second search party from various pack outfits. By evening I had my own Star Outfit searching, with only two herders left to take care of our horses, in the country round Bobtail Lake.

After that I stopped every outfit on the trail; daily the woodlands rang with the cries and the gun-shots of the searchers; on the hills we lit great fires; expert trackers were out in search of signs; but those who went out noisily would come back silent, and in camp men would wake at night screaming, "I'm lost! I'm lost!"

On the third day the rain began, obliterating the tracks. We could hardly bring ourselves to eat—he had no food; or to sleep—he had no fire. Every comfort of the camp arraigned us, charged us with lazi-

ness in the search; if anyone ventured to laugh, he was stared out of countenance, while the kindly inquiries of newcomers gave us vague offense. For now if we dared a hope it was that delirium had come soon to the lost man, for his merciful deliverance from pain. Like a little child he would make the woods his kingdom, some fallen tree his throne, all the wonders revealed to him that reason hides from us. He would never know pain again, or sorrow, or want, but the peace of God—then sleep.

On the fifth day, learning that there were Indians some fifty miles to the northward, I sent one of our herders from the advanced camp. The horsemanship of English hunting stood him in good stead now, for he rode all night through darkness, over unknown ground, crossing deep mire, stony hills, and dangerous rivers. So, moved by his persuasion, at evening of the sixth day, five Indians came into camp afoot, having left their horses played out along the trail. On the seventh morning they started into the woods, and I suspended all other searching lest they should be embarrassed by fresh tracks. Late in the evening they returned hopeful, having found C——'s trail and followed it to where, upon his first night, he had

rested against a tree. On the eighth morning, full of hope, I sent two white men with them to verify their work, and all day we waited in camp, restless, sick with anxiety. Darkness had fallen before the Indians came back from the last search of all. Traveling painfully over dead-fall timber, guided here by a rotten log crushed in, there by a bent twig, they had come to the crossing of a little stream some fifteen miles from camp. Beyond that there was not a trace for miles—not a sign.

Henceforth no offer of reward could induce the Indians to continue the hopeless search, and white men cannot track. Still, with bloodhounds, we might have been in time, but there were none within five hundred miles.

So on the tenth day, we who were left gathered about our campfire for the last time, and it remained for me to suggest plans for the future. Our food had all been spent in the search, which meant short rations until some of us could bring a load of provisions from Quesnelle. Two parties would then be formed for the march northward, each financing itself, and this could be done by the division of C——'s share in the company, and my own. My leadership

must be resigned, and my presence would be needed in England, where I must get probate for C——'s widow. The company gave me a paper holding me free from blame.

All of them, though nearly starved to death, reached the Stickeen in safety, with sixteen horses out of the fifty-one which we had bought, and in this fared better than most men on that disastrous trail.

On the Edmonton trail to the Klondike very few got through alive, and whole companies of men are known to have perished. On the Ashcroft trail, the best thing to be said is that certainly no bodies were found. The facts will never be known.

It is still rather a puzzle to me how I got home to England. At Ashcroft I had nothing left but a horse blanket and a bad dose of neuralgia. Afterwards I fell ill. But these things are better left unwritten, for, if one sins in company, one must always take the punishment alone, humbly and revering its justice.

Slowly the news leaked out that I had murdered C——, and, because his name was one held in great honor, the Press was eager to do justice to such news as came out from the forest. I have by me sharp personal criticism from a learned journal at Ran-

goon, comment wherein the *Times* of Singapore, and the *Times* of London, are agreed with the *Melbourne Age* and a paper in Mexico. For months there were lurid details of search expeditions, of Indians holding the body to ransom, of a skeleton identified by a ring with armorial bearings, then came rumors of the man himself being seen alive in England. I have no facts or theories.

XV

THE LONG TRAIL

AFTER that disaster on the Ashcroft trail I went back to my trade of writing books, worked for a year, sold a lot of rotten ideas for a lot of rotten money, and it was not good enough. Not for our opinions, intentions, or ideas shall we be judged at the last, not for our scribbles on foolscap, but for the things we have done. Fancy having to face the Day of Judgment with no credentials except literary "appreciations" by eminent revilers of books!

I had been something better than a windbag, must have fought pretty hard to get so thoroughly thrashed, and might yet be a man instead of sinking to a beastly imitation in trousers and a pot-hat. At the end of a year, ready to fight it out with Death, to fight to the finish, I rode out from the gates of Fort Macleod to make a record in horsemanship—or get killed.

What were the existing records? Sotnik Dmitri

Peshkof rode a Cossack pony, named Seri, a running-walker, from Vladivostock to St. Petersburg, 5500 miles, in 193 days at 28 miles a day. This is a world record for travel on a road with aid of signposts and hotels, and as a feat of horsemanship unrivaled. Kit Carson rode from the Mississippi to California, twenty-two hundred miles through wild country among hostile tribes. Neither of these records could be broken; there is hardly room for such a road distance in the one case or for such hazard in the other, but a third standard might be set—perhaps, of horsemanship and scouting in difficult ground.

In 1888 I had attempted to ride from Western Canada to the City of Mexico, and was smashed up at the end of the sixteenth mile, as aforesaid. Now the trails of the American pioneers had all run from east to west. These trails are now permanent ways, the seven transcontinental railways, and upon these threads hang beads of settlement. But between the threads what is there? The Great American Desert extends from the Rocky Mountains to California, in extreme breadth about fifteen hundred miles between Texas and the Pacific. Defining "Desert" as country too dry for farming, where all bushes are spiked,

thorned, or aromatic, the Great American Desert touches the Canadian Pacific in the Thompson valley, and extends southward far into the heart of Mexico, rather more than three thousand miles. No man had ever ridden the length of that Desert, such a ride across dry country had not been recorded, and the achievement would take rank in the annals of horsemanship. It was not to be done for a bet, or for advertisement—I wanted to get back my self-respect.

"Roll your tail, and roll it high,
We'll all be angels by and by."

"Hit the trail," says the song of the cowboys, "home with the spurs, and roll your tail and ride! for since we'll all be angels, black or white in time, let's make the best of a hard proposition and enjoy the earth while it lasts."

In fear of getting lost, I took the Rocky Mountains for a guide. There they were in snow and sunlight against the westward sky, and southwards the Plains once more reaching away for ever and ever, Amen. I wanted to sing hymns, but my voice is like a wolf's howl, and it is the intention God hears, not the distressful sounds. Besides I had to behave myself, rid-

ing with a Mounted Police Patrol—with subtle Aramis.

The boys had been feeding me at the dear old D Troop mess, giving me saddle wallets, advice about greasy heels, also silk handkerchiefs, and a hearty God-speed for the long trail. Farther south I camped with Sergeant Athos, dined with Porthos, who is a sergeant-major now in South Africa, and found d'Artagnan, turned cowboy, but presently to take the war-trail against the Boers. The patrols passed me on through the Blood Indian country and the Mormon settlements, down to the United States boundary. There is a heap of stones all scratched and painted with the names of travelers, and it stands upon a ridge parting the waters of Hudson's Bay from the waters of the Mexican Gulf. The patrol could come no farther with me, and when I reached the foot of the hill I looked back, homesick. And there against the sky the trooper sat, his horse motionless, the sun in glory upon his harness, glowing in the warm colors of his cowboy dress—Good-by!

The Plains were all tawny gold, of wind-swept grass and shadows coldly blue, life in the light, death in the shade, lonely as man's career, reaching away

ahead. In a tremor of fear I went slowly, and then setting my teeth, spurred on, so long as there was light to see the trail—the long trail.

Forty miles southward in Montana, I came next day to an Agency in the Blackfoot nation, and found it was Independence Day, the Fourth of July. Just beyond the buildings my horse, Tom, swung into step with a holiday crowd of cowboys, each man riding his very best pony. The pets talked horse-fashion among themselves, but the riders were silent, all save the yapper, who, being slack of jaw, would fling out three or four terse words to the mile. Cowboys rarely speak on the trail unless they have something to say. They see by the signs weather three days ahead, know by tracks who has passed for the last week, notice by brands whose horses or cattle are around them—but the man who mentions these facts assumes his comrades blind.

We rolled into a camp of fourteen hundred Indians, a mile-wide ring of cone-shaped, smoke-browned tents, their canvas painted with mystical figures, and each lodge attended by a little tripod of sticks bearing a plumed drum or other sacred emblem. Far off we could hear soft-footed drums measuring a dance,

and one other big drum having a good time all by itself. That lone drum lived in the Medicine Lodge, a big round house of boughs where the young warriors were being proved by ordeal of torture, prayers were made to the Great Spirit, and the pipe went round among the chiefs and sorcerers.

Towards the little drums we thundered at a gallop, and drew up all smoking beside an inclosure of wagons. There the squaws were celebrating the Grass Dance, dressed in bright robes, adorned with little mirrors, dyed grass, quills, small feathers, brass cartridge shells, and penny paper fans. They stood in a crescent, shoulder to shoulder, shuffling with bent knees sideways, all to the melancholy rumble of the drums, chanting a wild song which was too old to mean anything at all, but stirred up vague emotions, half-memories.

Warriors were squatting round the circle in their robes of embroidered and painted skins, broad belts studded with brass carpet-tacks, eagle plumes, bear-claw necklaces. Their faces were gorgeously painted. A gentleman who sports a horse's tail in position, whose complexion is in violent stripes of red and yellow, whose ornaments were looted from dust-bins,

would look incongruous, say, in the House of Commons. With antic leaps and melancholy howls two score of gentlemen danced each for himself without any attention to the rest, and all the time one felt that they were warriors, hunters, horsemen, for nothing could quite rob them of their dignity. A nice little boy, aged six, much dressed and painted, was at the front of every dance in a state of prodigious bliss. This small pagan was the best boy in the Agency Sunday School. Near by there were sham fights on foot and horseback, each telling in action the tale of some old-time war. The audience rode to and fro, half-breeds in the buckskin dress of times gone by, cowboys ogling the pretty young squaws, hunters, trappers, scouts, freighters, all sorts of frontiersmen, smoking cigarettes, and swapping lies while we watched the Indian games. Afterwards came the race meeting on a track beside the camp, and the grand stand was a grassy bank, where we rolled at our ease, made bets, and watched the winners home. A cloud of dust would gather in the distance, come thundering down the course, then break with a flash of bright colors into the foreground, the ponies with smoking nostrils, gleaming eyes, and

hoofs tearing the ground. The judges never knew which won, until the grand stand explained, in mass, with strong language. Everybody was perfectly happy, and it was much more fun than the Derby.

At last the sun went down behind the Rocky Mountains, and in the cool of evening we rode to the Agency buildings. There was a half-breed dance, a display of fireworks, and for me a corner in the hay-loft, where I got some sleep towards morning.

After that for many days I rode under the shadow of the Rockies, where both land and air were defiled by sheep, a kind of vermin which no horseman likes. Neither would I speak with the herders, a prejudice which put me to shame when afterwards I heard of the great autumn storms. For when the snow-storms came they stayed with their flocks, guarding them, saving them—and their bodies were found beside the sheep pens.

Sometimes on the lonely Plains I would meet the wild range horses; a stallion guarding his harem of smug mares would come sailing down, mane and tail in the air, ears back, teeth bared, wanting to fight me, neighing his lordly challenge. My horse would be quaking with fright before the beast wheeled at

ten paces from me, cast the dust of his heels in my face, and drove his harem of mares away from temptation.

I found settlements strung out all across Montana, and had only to camp three nights on a road of four hundred miles. Overbearingly exalted are the folks of mine and mill, farm and growing town, where much is promised, little yet fulfilled. So is a half-broiled fish suggestive to the eager appetite, though not so far alluring to the teeth. "What d'ye think of my fish?" says Montana, spitting truculent on unwashen floors. "Strongest on earth, eh? Yes, Siree! makes you played-out Easterners wilt!" One shrinks past, holding one's nose.

The grace of humility lurks only in towns gone smash, where some few survivors, nailed by the ears to a mortgage, take vengeance for their woes on the unusual traveler. One such place was Three Forks, placed at the meeting of three streams, which unite to form the Missouri, longest river on earth. It was quite a large town, with shops and churches, hotels, and dust enough for two thousand people, but there were only three families remaining—the rest having been driven away, I think, by mosquitoes. There are

many such eddies in that torrent of marching civilization known as the West.

A day's march through farms, a night-ride over mountains, and, beyond that, a long stretch of baking desert brought me to the Yellowstone Park. It is fifty miles long, fifty wide, its valleys at twice the altitude of Snowdon, its mountains a mile above that, in the eternal ice. It is a forest full of horseflies and mosquitoes, where big white roads go coiling through the green. Choked with dust one drinks at a wayside spring, and laps up sparkling Apollinaris; wondering at the monotony of the timber, one comes to a precipice of black bottle-glass in huge columnar crystals; and beyond that the road winds for miles by a cool brook threading between pools of boiling water. No beryls, no sapphires are quite so lovely as those deep, clear wells set in a fairy lacework of white carving, and shot with strange rays of iridescent light. Then there are terraces of snowy sculptured stairs leading up into the blue of heaven; acres of smoking white rock where jets from hell are blowing off like the thunderous exhaust of an ocean liner; and at intervals mounds of plaster from whence enormous columns arise of diamond water, half veiled in pearly

steam. Pots of boiling paint, cataracts of hot water, tracts where the standing forest is changed to jasper and onyx; then, after a week of wonders and marvels, when every faculty of the mind is benumbed with over-astonishment, one comes at last to the Grand Canyon of the Yellowstone. My main impression was that I must have gone crazy. A big river comes out of a big lake, and leaps headlong into an abyss twelve hundred feet deep. The sides of this chasm are prickly with rock spires and pinnacles, crimson and rose, olive and orange, golden-brown and salmon, snow, ruby, and topaz, color gone mad, heaven turned loose, from the steel-blue torrent up to the somber forest and the arch of the cloud-flecked sky. Even the godless tourist is struck speechless.

The forest reeks with them, camped in the glades, drawling between meals in the hotels, dragged through the blinding dust in wagonettes. The Liars who drive them are tame farmers, loaded each to the muzzle with Wild West fiction for their "dudes." The "dudes," poor things, believe everything, photograph everything, choke, and scratch their mosquito bites, guggle at the dust, and pay a deal more than they ever expected. Also there are many families,

called "sagebrush tourists," emigrants such as are forever moving by wagon through the West in search of the promised land. These turn aside for a rest in the Park, and are camped in its glades by hundreds.

Nobody may use a gun, there are patrols of United States Cavalry to see to it, and the forest swarms with game. The bears, grizzlies, black, brown, cinnamon, lumbering beasts as big as an ox, ravage the ash-heaps at the camps and hotels, and are photographed in the act by schoolma'ams in dusters and eyeglasses.

The hotels have barricaded their larders, but the bears like to scratch themselves on the nicely spiked doors before they break in for refreshments; or, failing that, they search among the rooms and corridors hoping for a nice fat child. One self-indulgent bear sacked my camp, and left me with nothing but coffee and tobacco among the ruins of the commissariat.

The troopers of the 7th Cavalry saved me from subsequent hunger, behaving most brotherly. And their accomplishments were truly surprising. Bashful young men admitted at my campfire they could shoot an ace of spades at a hundred yards, lasso a

buffalo bull, ride anything with hair on it, and presently intended to arrest "Mac," the President of the Republic, for infracting the rules of the Park. All this they had acquired in six weeks of military service, and surely veterans of three months' standing must be horribly dangerous.

But for the cavalry protection, wicked tourists would molest the helpless geysers, inciting them with an emetic of soap to untimely spouting. But these formidable guardians of the Law make the trembling citizen to keep off the grass, and throw him into a dungeon if he adorns the scenery with his honorable name and address. No trifle is too small for the attention of the Army, but within fifty miles I came into a community of outlaws who live by robbing trains, banks, coaches, and trading-posts, by stealing bunches of cattle, and shooting sheriffs—they had shot one six weeks ago. The tourist is kept off the grass; but the robber slaughters herds of elk just for the sake of their eye-teeth, which are desired as watch-charms by the brethren of the "Elk" Secret Society. This minute attention to signboards and official observances, coupled with splendid indifference to mere robbery and murder, should teach our effete monarchy

how we might be advantaged from a groveling imitation of Republican Freedom.

The outlaw stronghold is in Jackson's Hole, where there is a lake dominated by the sublime walls and icy spires of the Grand Teton. Under the shadow of that stupendous mountain, I found two or three times in a day's march some log-cabin among the trees by a water spring. Antlers branched from the gable; and within were heads and pelts nailed to the timbers of the wall, traps, guns, snowshoes, horsegear, all the equipments of a hunter. There were no women, and the men wore their harness of belt and boot, spur and gun, with a certain unconscious grace one only sees on the remote Frontier. They were for the most part hunters and trappers, but a few of the quiter men lived by robbery under arms. Their trail belongs to the next chapter.

My way led eastward, up from the sagebrush valley through gorges walled with cliffs of bright orange, olive, and terra-cotta rock; then higher through meadows and timber to the upper pastures of the Gros Ventre Mountains, where the snow lay deeply drifted in July; and after that down to the sagebrush valley of Green River, where I camped,

weather-bound, at the Dog Ranch. All that country was thick with cast antlers, tracks and sign of elk, moose, and blacktail, deer, sheep; wolves, foxes, wolverine, lynx; first-class bears—grizzly; second-class bears—cinnamon, black, brown (no third class); beaver, musquash, marten, polecat; and there are fifty wild bison. Moreover there are eagles in that land, hawks, owls, geese, duck, pelicans, cranes, heron, grouse, pintails, sage hens. It is, perhaps, the best hunting ground left in North America. The weather was past all excuse detestable, and it was more than wealth to sit by the hearth at the Dog Ranch while the hunters swapped lies, and the dogs played at sleep-listening with one ear up. The year's stores being delayed by the rains, there was little to eat, so hungry men cast wistful eyes down the valley. When at last word came of the supply wagons stuck in a mudhole on the home pasture, we all turned out to help. We unloaded the wagons, hauled them with ropes out of one mudhole and another, then loaded up again to repeat the trouble. But dinner that day was an event.

Next came the first of the autumn sportsmen, a Chicago banker; the place was in a rush of prepara-

tion, and the Boss went off with a pack-train of five riggings. He had fifty miles to go across the mountains, there to be married to a lady, thence to bring her home—or failing that, a barrel of whisky. The pack animals were to carry the trousseau. Long afterwards I heard that the return was a double triumph of both—the lady for the Boss, and the whisky for the boys.

While I sat on the hearth at the Dog Ranch a man rode up to the house, dismounted, and put his head in at the door, asking directions for Jackson's Hole. An honest man would have walked in expecting dinner, would have been welcome to something more than directions for a fifty-mile ride through a most awful storm. The stranger was dressed like a bank clerk, the toes sticking through his worn-out city shoes; he was wet to the hide and exhausted, he rode a superb horse without a saddle. We watched him go down to the river,—not suffering like a town tenderfoot, but riding,—we saw him almost carried away in the deep ford, and then he disappeared into the swirl of sleet; a robber flying from justice.

Now the hunters are all forest-rangers of the State of Wyoming to guard the timber and the game; and

if the outlaws would only leave the elk alone, they might kill all the sheriffs they liked. But sometimes, when business is slack and purses are tight, the outlaws amuse themselves by slaughtering elk.

Naturally the hunters object, and shortly before my arrival there was a little unpleasantness—one episode out of many. A party of hunters were ambushed near the Dog Ranch by a band of outlaws, and were forced to retreat with some loss of dignity. Also there arose a feud between a lumber-camp, which was supplied with venison by a robber, and a certain forest-ranger who stopped the supply. The lumbermen were laying for that ranger, and on my way down Green River I stopped at the camp in his company. There was reason for some little watchfulness —I had no gun.

Here I was face to face at last with the problem of a six-months' ride across the Great Desert. To the eastward lay Colorado, a labyrinth of high alps, and beyond that New Mexico and Eastern Chihuahua, said to be bare of forage. To the westward one could only get clear of the impassable Grand Canyon of the Colorado by way of Death Valley, the Gila Desert, and Sonora, where many expeditions had perished of

thirst. Straight ahead was a region cut to pieces by a maze of impenetrable chasms, then the Navajo and Apache Indian countries where I was sure to be scalped, and beyond that the land of the Border Ruffians, where I was fairly certain to be murdered. All three routes led into Mexico, where I could not possibly find the way unless I followed trail directions in an unknown tongue.

With a wagon carrying forage and water—how about cliffs? With a bicycle which needs no forage or water—how about deep rivers? With wings? Alas! despite the best hair-restorers mine have not yet sprouted. With saddle and pack-horse I must find grass and water every day or perish. Musing these cheering details I went straight ahead by the middle route, and, thanks to the cowboys and outlaws, my bones are not bleaching on the sands.

Being very lonely, and a natural-born fool, I had taken up with a loose-footed barber for company, and now, as we descended Green River Valley, I hoped at every ford that he would get washed away. Every emergency was to be viewed now as a fresh deterrent to the barber—but he was faithful. Crossing the Union Pacific Railway at Green River City, we were

chased by five cheerful locomotives into a quicksand, where my horse was nearly drowned—my partner got across dryshod. Swimming the river in a bad place a few days later, the pack-horse tried to use me as an islet in midstream from whence to survey the scenery—that barber said he had saved my life. Bless him!

Next we came to some gentle, alluring hills which curled up nicely to an overhanging comb. Higher and higher as we advanced, ridge beyond ridge went up like rollers on a sea-beach, hurricane-lashed, gigantic, thousands of feet in sheer height, mountains which curled to a jagged edge of overhanging precipice. Swinging eastward through the trough between two waves, we found the gorgeous Red Creek Canyon, which led, like the path of Israel, through the depths of this Red Sea, and so out into the rolling sagebrush valley called Brown's Park. This district is, like Jackson's Hole, an outlaw stronghold tenanted in part by respectable, well-to-do robbers. To the westward of it, in the canyons of Green River, there is a meadow fenced by cliffs, a hiding-place for stolen herds of cattle and robbers in retreat; indeed, descending Red Creek Canyon, we must have crossed the dim trail

which leads to this mysterious pasturage. The trail enters the mountains from one of the Brown's Park ranches, the owner of which is an expert at staving off awkward inquiries. A cowboy told me how once at this ranch he saw a bunch of cattle driven up the hills, close followed by a sheriff's posse in hot pursuit. Only by misdirections to the sheriff were the outlaws saved from capture; and the officers of the law are still in the dark as to where the trail begins and where it leads to. Here, at the very gateway of the hidden stronghold, it was my curious fortune to meet the garrison. My partner and I had made camp in the ranch meadows, and at sundown I strolled to the house to buy potatoes. While I was there four cowboys came down out of the hills, and at their appearance my host became flurried and uneasy, making hasty excuses to get rid of me. Later in the night I heard the strange horsemen clattering up the loose stones of the hillside, bound, no doubt, by the hidden trail, to the outlaw camp in the canyons. That was my second meeting with desperadoes in hiding, and I had the additional pleasure in Brown's Park of dining with a notable robber—I may not name him, the guest of a public enemy eats under flag of truce.

Here, the southward mountains are cleft to the roots, and Green River flows into the red jaws of the terrific canyon Lodore. We passed to the eastward, and crossed several ranges of mountains, with wild and lonely valleys between, each with its river and its thread of settlement. In one hundred and eighty-three miles we had met fifty-four persons and so felt that we were entering a crowded country, when, swinging down out of the Roan Mountains, we saw the steel rails gleaming in the Grand River Settlements, and cantered through the farms to the city of Grand Junction, Colorado. Here my partner saw five barbers' shops in a row; the painted poles bewitched him, and the razors and the scissors cried out to him.

He wrung my hand at parting, deeply moved—he to exercise his virtues in their natural sphere, and I for the long trail.

Before facing the desert again I had a two-days' debauch on milk and honey, whisky, cigars, fruit, and chocolates. It is curious how one puts all one's pleasures to one's mouth, especially the feminine. Hitting the trail, I climbed up out of the walled desert of Grand River into a nice park ten thousand feet high, where there are woods and grassy meadows, songbirds,

frosty nights, and running waters. Two days' ride through paradise brought me to the end, the edge. This State of Colorado is so named after the vivid red of its quartzite rocks, and here flaming scarlet walls went down into a blue of moonlight. Immense chasms defined a labyrinth of embattled cliffs, and beyond the farther wall of chaos rose clustered peaks to heaven. I must get my three horses across, and there was no trail. The way was down a four-thousand-foot bank of grass, where I led my unwilling beasts with brutal ropes round their noses. There was heaps of trouble at the bottom, for the floor of the Unaweep Canyon would puzzle a mountain goat. This led down into the canyon Dolores, which was worse, because I could not find the way up the farther wall. Sheer above rose the scarlet heights on every side, each castellated mountain crowned with cool, green forest, while the depths in which I wandered glowed with a furnace heat. On the third day I found a mighty bay of cliffs, with a gap in the middle guarded and half filled by a monster column. The slope below might have been the ruins of a London set on edge, and my horses fought desperately rather than face that particular stairway to paradise. Beyond the pillar there were

cattle-tracks up the edge of a knife-like ridge, the way swinging across to some projecting ledge which hung in space, then back again, and up to something worse.

My saddle-horse got the rope under his tail, and bucked like a fiend, but his gait was always rough anyway, and his pitching no worse than his trot, so I kept my seat. Then the led horse pulled him over a crag and he fell ten feet; but I got off at the top. All three horses plunged, reared, and fought me in places where there really was no room for argument; the scrub of pine and cedar became impenetrable; then at last, at Point Despair, the stairway eased to a slope. After many hours of hard fighting I had conquered the Gateway trail, and seventeen miles of park and prairie brought me to the first ranch on the Mesa la Sal in Utah. How had I come? asked the cowboys. "Followed your tracks," said I; "where you drove cattle any fool could ride." "We didn't," said the cowboys; "we headed cattle into the bottom at sundown. They worked their way up hunting grass, and we found them on the rim rocks in the morning."

Next day I came upon a sheep-herder, who sat on

a log, his dog beside him, his rifle on his knees. "Sorry to see you here," said I, for the pasturage was fine. "So am I," answered the destroyer; "beastly shame, isn't it? I brought my herd here last week, another bunch came last night, and we're waiting to see if the cowboys will run us out. If they don't there are five more herds to follow."

Across these States I had seen the country reduced to desert by the sheep, the grass torn out by the roots so that cattle and horses starved, and stock-owners reduced to beggary or flight. In one Colorado district a sheepman had come with thirty thousand head, and for ten years ravaged the country. For ten years the cattlemen tried peaceable methods; attempted to buy out the enemy. In the end the sheepman was waited upon by a hundred and fifty armed riders, who strongly advised him to go. He went, but it was six years before the land recovered and the cattle-owners again had accounts at the bank. Now, here was the enemy camped in the beautiful Mesa la Sal, wondering if the cowboys would object.

I rode pretty hard that day, and at night brought

warning to some cowboys. If ever you hear of thousands of sheep butchered at night by masked riders, or driven headlong over a precipice, that only means the saving of the stock range. The sheep-owner has the lawyers at his back, even if he destroy the whole industry of a country and replace a score of hard-working cowboys with one half-witted herder. I side with the masked riders, because human rights are stronger than any law.

From the cow-camps down into the Desert, and there I saw a lone rock, the natural statue, two hundred feet high, of a great Red Indian chief, his robe drawn about him, his bare head thrown back as though he were speaking. I have never seen so grand a monument.

I was following then the trail of the Kids, of the boy mail-riders who in these parts ride to outlying settlements fifty or a hundred miles across the Desert. The mail-bag is slung on their saddles, they dress as cowboys, wear big revolvers, despise all other boy-kind whatsoever, and are much hated and envied by boy-persons. Here is an ideal for boys to dream of, only, unfortunately, there are no pretty girls to rescue from robbers, no Indian scalp-hunters to fly from,

and the riders I met were heartily sick of their job.

By the mail-rider's trail I found my way to the Mormon outposts, where I began to find out about the great outlaw stronghold of Utah.

XVI

THE TRAIL OF THE OUTLAW

WHAT are the outlaws like? To recognize an outlaw at sight requires a more subtle observation than I dare pretend. There is a queer look in the eyes of many cowboys—that of a brave man riding to visible destruction, and this is intensified if they sink to crime. A peculiar droop of the eyelid often marks the felon, a certain hardness of the face comes to the gentlest lads who have gone wrong, and every murderer I ever met was quiet, reticent, watchful, cynical. All these qualities one may detect by watching for a day or two the shifting moods of an outlaw. About him there is an atmosphere of one doomed beyond all hope, all pardon, and yet at first contact he only differs from other men in charm.

I am moved to gush, to be sentimental, to suggest that such a man is not like the conventional criminal, a disease in human shape, with a gorilla's intelligence and a jackal's courage, that he is at the lowest esti-

mate a mighty beast of prey, and that, considering his open, unflinching war against powers celestial and terrestial, it is not mawkish to extend Christian pity to a fallen spirit.

My first warning on meeting an outlaw was an uncanny sense of being *seen through,* next I was made aware of a reserve as impenetrable as that of the well-bred Englishman, and, this being accepted, found myself drawn, like steel to a magnet, into a curious intimacy. I was welcomed in homes, camps, even strongholds of the most dangerous criminals in the world. In a town I took elaborate precautions, securing my treasure-belt, harness, and horses from thieves or cheats. Among outlaws who live by robbery, and defend themselves by murder, I traveled seven hundred miles with no misgivings. Twice I ran some risk, but that was through being mistaken for a robber.

The bandits with whom I camped and traveled did not pose as such, but by cautious inquiry I found some of them to be notable men with a price on their heads "dead or alive." Frankly I asked them for information about the robbers, with equal candor they gave me most valuable help, or, if the scent got too warm,

they lied. That made the inquiry difficult, but suppressing all facts told in confidence, all names of informants—some of whom placed their very lives in my hands—and all details useful to the law, I can still give verified evidence throwing light on the whole system of outlawry as it was up to January, 1900. If I leave out the best parts of the story it is because men's lives are at hazard.

The social disease of outlawry is much reduced in scope and virulence as settlement extends across the West. Judge M'Gowan's gangs of desperadoes actually ruled California in the early times of the gold rush, when in five years there were forty-two hundred homicides. Mr. Plummer, Sheriff of Montana City in 1864, used his official authority to wipe out rival outlaws, being himself captain of a gang of highway robbers numbering one hundred and thirty, and responsible for one hundred murders. Such feats are no longer possible, but the government being still very weak and quite incompetent, it is not surprising to find even now a banditti which has robbed or wrecked scores of express trains, dozens of coaches, banks, and small towns, and in the Desert is destroying the cattle industry.

I found that during the last decade a system of robber bands has existed along a curved line twenty-five hundred miles in length. Since 1890 many of their strongholds have been swept away by armed citizens. The Tonto Basin gang, the Coconino gang, the Clock, Dalton, and Cook gangs, the Mexican Lopez and Guerrero gangs have all been shot out. Twenty-seven robbers were shot in the Tonto alone. There remain the Jackson's Hole and Hole-in-the-wall gangs of Wyoming, the Brown's Park and Robbers' Roost gangs of Utah, a little gang near Wilcox (Arizona), certain Border Ruffian gangs on the Texas-Mexico Line, and the Indian Territory gangs. These two last I know nothing about, not having met them, but the total numbers are given as four hundred men living entirely by robbery-under-arms. The various gangs are said—but this is not confirmed—to communicate by means of cipher advertisements in a matrimonial paper. The general headquarters of the system is a great central stronghold, the Robbers' Roost in Utah.

In my attempt to reach this mysterious place, I came, in Southeastern Utah, to a range marked in the maps Sierra Abajo, but known as the Blue Moun-

tains. There I found what must have been a very big cattle ranch, founded by a supposed English lord of eccentric tastes. For his cowboys he engaged all the bad men he could find, and they robbed him out of the business. Three miles southward of the ranch is the Mormon Colony of Monticello, where many years ago these wicked cowboys attended a ball, making the reverend elders to dance to the tune of revolver-shots fired at shrinking feet. Among these Mormons, too, was one Tom Roach, who at another entertainment suddenly turned wolf, shot a man for dancing with his wife, and took up an offertory of purses. A young lad had the courage to take a shot at Roach, but unhappily missed him and killed a woman. Then the new wolf out of the Mormon fold rode off to join the wolf-pack at the ranch. The wolf-pack matured into the Robbers' Roost gang, now an outlaw firm of twelve years' standing, numbering thirty-four partners.

I thought in my innocence that once I reached Monticello, where the Mormons must know all about it, I would easily secure a guide to take me on to the stronghold. Not a bit! Why, when I stabled my horse with the Very Reverend Bishop of Monti-

cello, he thought ill of me at once. Want to go to the Robbers' Roost? In haste he sent out, warning the whole community against me—I was an outlaw! I could not get anything to eat, had no end of trouble, and it was quite late in the evening before I found the milk and honey of a Mormon household—being hungry enough to chew up log-barns in default.

A New York paper has described the stronghold as a fortified cave, equipped with machine guns, guarded by sentries, only approached by one trail, and that death for intruders. This vision is furnished with a grand piano, electric lights, and telephones. Imagination is, indeed, the soul of journalism, and outlawry must be gilded to allure young fools into crime. As for me, who traveled by stony trails in search of facts, I have, in talk with members of the gang, seen their hard mouths twist to an ugly grin over the inventions of the Yellow Journalists. The way of the outlaw is a steep and bloody track through days of splendid excitement, nights of awful despair, and the only end is a violent death at the Gate of Everlasting Damnation. I saw few modern conveniences in the cabins of the outlaws; their homes were common ranches, their camps below the average of

comfort. Once, years ago, I stumbled into an outlaw camp which was actually starving. I was kicked out.

The headquarters of the bandits may be easily located on a map. See where the Green and Grand Rivers meet to form the Colorado. Just below that, the west bank of the Colorado is a precipice called the Orange Cliffs. To the north is the San Rafael Canyon, to the south the Dirty Devil Canyon, torrents of rushing mud lost in profound gorges. The tract of land on top of the Orange Cliffs, entirely surrounded by canyons, can only be reached by one or two difficult trails. Here stands a log house, the Robbers' Roost, with its corrals and spring of water, pasturage for horses and cattle; the cliffs are a fence, and the whole district a secure retreat from justice. The garrison generally numbers about ten out of thirty-four members of the gang. The house is cheered by the presence of one or two ladies, wives of outlaws; and in 1896 there were two Mormon girls stolen from Castle Valley who made no moan over their bondage. The place is just an ordinary ranch.

Captain M'Carty, described as general manager, is thirty-five to forty years of age, widowed of a Mormon wife who died eight years ago. He is from

Oregon, a cowboy, horse-breaker, and expert roper, inclined to "play tough," and has one murder to account for, that of an Indian. His son is a member of the gang; also a nephew, son of Bill M'Carty who was shot in 1886 while robbing the bank at Delta in Colorado. Mr. Butch Cassidy, second in command, is a cowboy, Roman Catholic. Mr. Jackson has four murders to his record. Messrs. Mickleson and Cofod are Danes, sheep-herders and Mormons, who shot the sheriff of San Pete County, Utah, and were for twelve months hidden by their friends in a coal-pit before they joined the gang. Also there are the Roberts brothers, who helped to kill the sheriff of Albany County, Wyoming; David Lant, a Mormon Englishman; John Wesley Allen, Methodist, a Texan horse-breaker; and Mr. Johnson, a member of the original wolf-pack. They are nearly all cowboys.

"The Union Pacific Railway and Pacific Express Companies offer 2000 dollars per head, dead or alive, for the six robbers who held up the Union Pacific mail and express train ten miles west of Rock Creek Station, Albany County, Wyoming, on the morning of 2d June, 1899."

So read the poster—"2000 dollars per head, dead

or alive." The express car had been blown up with dynamite, the express agent, after a gallant fight, fell mortally wounded, and the robbers got away with the treasure-chest—some eighty thousand dollars.

At Rock Creek the telegraph clerk awakened the agent, the agent ran for the sheriff, the sheriff aroused the sleeping town with a call for volunteers. Lights flashed from windows, men were shouting as they belted on their arms, saddled in haste, gathered in the street, waited for the sheriff's word, then clattered all away into the Desert. Down the track they rode at a steady trot to where the men stood with lanterns, calling to them. The horsemen scattered out, searching the ground, then one of them lifted his head yelling, and all gathered once more to swing into the horse-tracks of the robbers. Northward they rode in silence, while the light spread, while the sun rose, while the quivering air infolded them with heat. Silent they went all day through the burning haze and blinding light. In the evening they came to reefs of rocks, where the tracks led through a gap; and the pursuers went on weary, determined, eyes half-closed. All of a sudden little flames spat out at them from the rocks;

horses reared and bolted, men fell headlong, there was shooting at the air, shouting, panic; then all was quiet in the waning light of evening where the sheriff lay in his blood and slow wings flapped by overhead. That is the usual thing, and the robbers go back to their strongholds quite secure.

Now the robbing of trains, from a cold-blooded, business point of view, has many drawbacks. The engine-driver is apt to lash out a hose-pipe firing boiling water, the train is liable to be full of men with rifles, the treasure-car to be armor-plated, and a lot of good robbers have been spoiled with bullets or rope past all repairing; then a posse of riders in pursuit —whereas lifting cattle is a healthy occupation and most remunerative.

So dearly does the cowboy love dumb animals that west of the Rockies there is an indiscriminate promiscuous stealing of cows. Where stockmen make a handsome living by the theft of each other's cattle, they cannot, as amateurs, resent the raids of their professional brethren, the outlaws. Indeed the cowboys and the robbers are on the best of terms. For instance, in the winter of 1898-99, two cowboys, holding a bunch of cattle on the Blue Mountain Mesa,

fell in with a party of outlaws, who politely asked them to dinner. They rode to the outlaws' camp, which was in a strong position for defense. There they had a beautiful time, dined on their own beef, and felt quite at home, except that one of the robbers always stood over them with a loaded rifle.

A few days later, sixty of their cattle were missing, so they hunted around for the tracks of the friendly robbers. The trail led down into the Grand Canyon and across the Colorado to the mouth of Dirty Devil River. After that the robbers must have driven the stock in the river-bed, for there was not one track on the banks, so the cowboys scouted carefully up Dirty Devil Canyon. There was the outlaws' camp-fire still smoking, nobody at home, and the stolen cattle were grazing close by on the hillside. For once the robbers actually lost their plunder, because the two punchers, rounding up their stock, rode off in triumph.

From the point of view of the stolen cow, the gentlemen of the Robbers' Roost are too brusque. In 1897 a bunch of two hundred head were taken across the Grand Canyon, and must have had a most unpleasant passage. For lack of a trail, the robbers rigged a windlass at the top of the cliffs, then making

each animal fast by the horns, lowered her down a rock-chute. Then there was the river to swim, where a third of the sorely abraded cattle got drowned. Climbing the eastern cliffs, the stock were then run off their legs into Colorado, a posse of citizens being in hot pursuit of the robbers. Not that the outlaws were at all flurried, for they had time to steal a herd of horses, drive these into Utah, sell out, and so home for a well-earned rest at the stronghold. One robber stayed off at Bluff, a Mormon village, lost his share of the spoil over a game of poker, held up the winner, relieved him of a purse and revolver, and so homeward, belated but cheerful, to the Roost.

Of course this system of small sales and a quick turnover causes much irritation among the ranchers. But it only represents the retail wing of the business, and the wholesale department has to be managed more carefully. Stolen bunches of cattle are collected at the Robbers' Roost pasturage; the brands are altered to suit; then the annual herd is driven gently northward through Moab and Delta, then by a secret trail over the Roan Mountains. The rendezvous is, say, at Rattlesnake Bluffs, where the Hole-in-the-wall gang has a herd of Wyoming cattle waiting for fair ex-

change. Taking the Robbers' Roost herd, the Hole-in-the-wall gang drives on across Wyoming and sells out on the Northern Pacific Railway in Montana.

The cattle, now a thousand miles from where they were stolen, can be sold in perfect security; and the Robbers' Roost gang has Montana stock to offer in the Arizona market.

I found the outlaws most reticent as to their arrangements for agencies, brokerage, and banking; nor could I persuade any bankers or cattle-dealers to explain their business methods in dealing with Robbers' Roost Limited. That gave me no end of worry. However, I doubt if any member of the gangs would accept his share of the spoils in mere acceptances, or notes of hand, and the transactions are probably on a cash basis in gold on delivery.

Robbers' Roost Limited does its shopping at the Mormon colony of Moab, sending an occasional pack-train for supplies. The Moabites also keep shod horses ready to be "stolen" when needed. On such occasions the horses "robbed" from the Moabites are always punctiliously returned, also a certain pickax which has assisted in no less than seven deliveries of prisoners out of the local jail.

The Mormons at Bluff disapprove of robberies, so they told me, but are certainly far from unkind. For example, at 6 P. M. on the 12th of July, 1899, two well-armed "cowboys" rode into Bluff. They had some trouble in getting hay for their fourteen ponies, so it was eight o'clock before they supped on hot bread and milk at the stopping-house. Later in the evening they wanted to sell or trade off some of the ponies, but the shrewd Mormon elders did not care to accept their bills of sale, because there was doubt as to the title of ownership. Indeed, the two gentlemen were Mr. Butch Cassidy and Mr. Johnson, from the Robbers' Roost by way of Dandy crossing. In the morning they rode away, and some days later came a party of detectives in pursuit. The officers remained a week making inquiries, and finally departed on the wrong trail. But even had they been close on the track of the robbers, what chance could they have with one horse apiece in pursuit of men who knew the country, and could easily cover a hundred miles a day!

A horse in a fright will take a great many steps to the square yard, and I fancy those detectives trampled their own shadows all to pieces.

"Of course," said the people at Bluff, "we strongly

disapprove of the robbers. They pay cash, good prices, too, and they're sure polite to the women-folk." The robbers are popular heroes.

Yet with all that they rarely enter a house without posting a sentry on guard. And especially they need all their shyness in the Indian country since they rashly stole six hundred head of cattle from the Navajo nation. The Navajos, ever partial to scalps, would delight in getting a robber. Thus three days before I reached Red Lake trading post, on the main southward trail of the outlaws, three men camped there in the sands, who kept their fire burning for barely twenty minutes, and were careful to hide their faces from the trader. " They had come," they said, " two hundred miles on water and mountain scenery—and damned little water." They were bound from Robbers' Roost for canyon Diablo on the railway, probably intending to be good cowboys in San Francisco or Denver, while they spent their hard-earned savings on a drunk. Even robbers must have their summer vacation.

In the whole desert region I met only one man who openly expressed his abhorrence and contempt for outlaws. One day a cowboy had called at his camp,

and said from the saddle, "Shut your mouth about us, or clear out of this district."

He cleared out.

Bad talk about the robbers is only unwise; to betray them is dangerous. In 1895 Mr. Parker and two other robbers held up an express train near Ash Fork, Arizona, and the sheriff's posse, following, overtook the fugitives, who showed fight. One was shot and one escaped, but Parker was captured and conveyed to Phœnix. Feeling uneasy in the Phœnix jail, Parker shot one of his warders, wounded a citizen, and got clear away, heading at once for home at the Robbers' Roost. All would have gone well with the gentleman, but that on the Painted Desert he was reduced by desperate need to call at an Indian trading post known as Willow Springs.

Now Mr. Preston, the trader, and Mr. Parker, the outlaw, had worked together as cowboys on the range. Parker suspected nothing, and had supper in no fear whatever. But the trader knew his guest, not only as a former comrade, but also as a hunted man with a price on his head—wanted for robbery and murder. Parker rode away in peace, traveled thirty miles, and near the verge of Grand Canyon slept the sleep of

the tired, never suspecting that his host was out on his trail with a dozen Navajo trackers, such as never fail. Parker awoke to find himself a prisoner, was given up for the reward of two thousand dollars, and duly hanged for his crimes.

The cowboys say that Mr. Preston took money for the blood of his own comrade; but when I heard of this man who had done his duty as a citizen in face of almost certain vengeance, and when I knew that he still dared to live alone on the Painted Desert, distant but four days' march from the great stronghold, I felt that it would be an honor to meet with him.

Crossing the Painted Desert, I reached a little canyon where there is a pool of dirty water under a rock. There was a camp of cowboys, and as we all sat late round the fire, our talk was stopped of a sudden by the sound of wheels. A man drove into the camp, and presently I learned that the visitor was the trader, Mr. Preston, whose life could never be quite safe among the cowboys unless he came as their guest. The boys were loosing his horses, and he was giving them a drink from a stone bottle, when, leaving the fire, I walked up to him.

"Mr. Preston, I think?"

"Yes."

"The gentleman who got that robber?"

Thinking, no doubt, that I came from the Robbers' Roost to kill him, the trader let out a rough growl, his hand went to his hip, and in another instant I should have been shot. The boys jumped straight at him, held him back, and explained that I was not armed. Then I ate my words. Bad manners in a drawing room are detestable enough, but on the Desert a thing beyond excuse.

XVII

THE DESERT

I HAVE to deal now with matters still more remote from London and suburban secular interests, from the tables of the money-changers, and the seats of them which sell clients. There is one more trail, the last, the loneliest, which many of us in the Legion have traveled, leaving no word, a trail which has no name.

It is such an old trail; "now Moses . . . led the flock to the backside of the Desert, where the Spirit appeared unto him in a flame of fire." Many have followed in his track, have been their "forty days in the wilderness," have seen things unspeakable: young Indians fasting as suppliants for the ordeal by torture which shall approve them warriors; sailors waiting the end where white wings hover about some lost boat, and the sea, sunward, is gold like unto clear glass; travelers led on by mirage into dreamland—all who have entered the Valley of the Shadow.

I have to deal with that uncarthly trail, and some, reading between the lines, may understand.

I came to a part of the Desert where there stood natural rocks which, sculptured by slow abrasion of the wind-borne sand, stood sheer upon a plain like castles, temples, and embattled palaces of some dream-city. They seemed quite near when first I saw them through the quivering heat, but a ride of fifty miles hardly brought me abreast of their walls, their spires. Three times from high rock slopes I saw the long battlements loom above blue haze; and solitary mounds, columns, cathedrals, appeared at intervals for several days, outlying the city. No building ever raised by human hands could rival those lone rocks in their awfulness, their haunting beauty.

Then I came to a wave of sandstone towering about a hundred and fifty feet over the rock sea. Its known length is more than a hundred miles, and, like the crest of a tidal wave, its overhanging comb seems poised for the fall—yet, frozen as though by enchantment, remains poised forever. For a day I rode under the wave seeking a passage, and when at last a passable traverse was reached, I found it led only into a chaos of other such breakers most difficult to thread.

Good photographs, both of this comb-ridge and the monuments, I got from the Mormons at Bluff, but ranking, as they must, among the earth's wonders, I have not seen mention of them in any published records of travel. They are upon the Navajo Reservation, just south of the Rio San Juan.

Before leaving Bluff in the San Juan Canyon, to traverse this Navajo Desert, I was warned that, apart from the certainty of death by thirst, I should be most assuredly scalped. Also a party of prospectors came in gaunt with thirst and called me a fool. So I engaged a Navajo, the respectable Manito. He spoke Spanish, I English, so there was a silence between us which might be felt. He found his own horse, but where the deuce he discovered such a scarecrow remains to this day a mystery of the Desert. He found fuel for camping, grass occasionally, sometimes even the trail; but one night made a dry camp, lost within a hundred yards of a running stream, which here, emerging for a while from underground, flowed openly on the surface. At one dollar and a half a day and the run of his teeth, Manito showed a patience in delays and a forbearance from work which shone out in beautiful contrast to my sore haste

over cooking, packing, and driving, but still he would take quite an interest in killing off rattlesnakes where we camped, and in bashfully secreting such of my goods as pleased him. My horses at the time were a brace of lively cow-ponies, Messrs. Chub and Burley by name, who traveled all day for my amusement, all night for their own, making Manito sweat in pursuit, which was contrary to the gentleman's religion.

Several times a day we met Navajos of the tribe, when, lounging in the saddle, Manito would show me off, in clucks and grunts explaining my points—his new white squaw who did all his work, paying for the privilege of serving so great a chief. One warrior with easy assurance, showing forth his English, demanded:

"Where you from?"

"England," I answered humbly.

"England? Is that a fort?"

There was contempt in every inflection of his voice as he, the lordly Navajo (pronounced Návaho), armed with bow and arrows, sat his scarecrow, rattled his harness of massive silver, fingered five hundred dollars' worth of turquoise necklace, hitched up his ten-

cent breech clout, and inquired as to this England, this trader's hut, beyond the edge of his world.

The Navajos have a right to their pride. The tide of the Spanish conquest, flooding up out of Mexico, beat against this rock of the Navajo nation, and rolled back for the first time impotent. On the east the flood swept past far into Colorado, on the west lapped the base of Alaska, but this tiny power split the deluge in two. From here to Cape Horn was Spanish Empire, but the Navajos held their own. In later times they raided Spanish estates, lifted Mormon cattle, drove a Supai tribe over the mile-deep wall of the Grand Canyon; in fact they became a nuisance. At last in 1865 came one, Kit Carson, at the head of a force of Frontier cavalry, who armed the rival tribes, the Mexicans, the Mormons, and all their countless enemies, with guns against the Navajo arrows, shot down their sheep by thousands, burned all their cornfields, cut away their orchards of peach trees. Desperately as they fought, the courage was starved out of the Navajos, and in twelve months they were reduced to eating rats. Then Carson rounded them up, twelve thousand in number, drove them to Fort Sumner, threw them into a corral, and for two

years fed them on rancid bacon and moldy corn. Their spirit was broken at last, and the chiefs crawled on their bellies to beg the white man for mercy. So they came home to their desert.

Now they number twenty-two thousand, and, with their herds of sheep, cattle, horses, and goats, are perhaps the richest savages in the world; pursue their ancient industries of farming maize by the streams, weaving curious robes in their earthen huts, forging silver, and cutting turquoise from their hidden mines, and, haughtier than ever, lack nothing from the despised white man except tobacco and sugar.

Through all the canyons and ravines of this region I saw houses of masonry built like swallows' nests in the caverns and hollows of the cliffs—but the race which built them has perished. To the eastward there are towers of dry masonry built like the old Scotch peels—but the race which built them has perished. To the southward, all over the wide deserts of Arizona and northern Mexico, I saw the ditches of a nation of farmers whose irrigated lands were greater than Egypt in acreage, whose hundreds of walled cities are crumbling slowly to ruin. The Spaniards who came, stuffy and uncomfortable in plate-armor, found these

cities in their prime, but by smallpox and gunpowder, fire-water and slavery, reduced the people to dry Catholic bones, all save the few surviving pueblos of the Moqui and the Zuñi. The ruins are guarded now by rattlesnakes which once were worshiped in forgotten shrines, and the American uses the ancient ditches to water modern farms. These villages in the cliffs, these towers on the hills, these cities of the plain, are dead, but they are not very old. Long before their time Mexico and Central America were populous with nations whose palaces and temples are still rich in gorgeous painting and most intricate sculptures, whose recovered calendars date six thousand years of vivid history. They are older than Egypt, yet they are not old. When the Toltecs were young the Mississippi valley had ancient cities, metropolitan in extent, and of age past counting. And fifty thousand assured years before the mound-builders, there was a community in the Columbia valley of farmers and sculptors. How many ages of savagery went before that earliest of known civilizations?

The sculptors, the mound-builders, the ancient Mexicans, these cave-lurkers, tower-dwellers, and city-builders of the Desert, the Red Indians, the Vikings,

the Spaniards, Dutch, Russians, English, Americans —nation upon nation, race upon race, as clouds driven before the wind, as stones built into a tower—Have mercy, Almighty, have mercy!

The sun blistered my hands, my mouth was, as usual, sticky and uncomfortable, furnace-blasts of wind lifted the sand in my face, the tracks had played out, and I almost wished I still had the Navajo to guide me, for I was lost. Such herbs and bushes as could live in that desert guarded their reserves of moisture under an armament of spines, hooks, spears, poison, and foul taste or nauseating smell. The poor things must make themselves appear unpleasant or be eaten, as also the rattlesnakes, tarantulas, scorpions, centipedes, and Gila monsters. All living creatures, editors included, would be gentle and charming but for their business necessities.

But it was a bad look-out for me and my weary horses; indeed, Burley, the pack animal, got sick of the whole enterprise, and started off S. S. W. at a gallop. This was rough on Chub, the hot, fat saddle-beast, especially as the chase led out of the sand-drift on to naked up-edged rock. We were sure lost,

all three of us; and little I guessed the wisdom which led Burley, until, discouraged by a long race, I looked up at the bare rock ridges—and saw close by a gallant row of Lombardy poplars! It was the Mormon Oasis of Tuba, and we were sure saved, all three of us.

The stubborn courage of these Western Boers—they are just like Boers—is spreading such colonies over the Desert, north into Canada, south into Mexico. I have seen their stores, their ditches for irrigation, their mills, their dairies, all co-operative; a people abstemious, with clean homes, and many signs of living religion which restrains from sin. Without being in the least self-righteous about it, they pay tithes of all they possess.

Now I belong to a Church which would consider such a demand nothing less than extortion. We reserve our smallest silver for the offertory, our warmest advice for the poor, and temper our piety with enlightened avariciousness as an example to all Jews, Turks, Infidels, and Heretics. We are, therefore, in a position to throw stones at these horrid Mormons, who believe in bigamy as a means of grace.

From a secular point of view, I think that the Mormon prospers at the price of his liberty. The Church

co-operative store, underselling the little tradesmen, kills out all private enterprise. The Bishop, pious rather than literate, is a deadly enemy to the man who dares to think. There is plenty of physical vigor, dancing, love-making, laughter; but books, magazines, and newspapers, I seldom managed to find in a Mormon home, and the people were in a state of mental death. It was a relief to find a Gentile village, drunken, profligate, wildly licentious, but alive, full of brave little business ventures, prosperous, growing, where men could think, debate, and fight with hope in their eyes.

For hundreds of miles along the trail, I read the Book of Mormon, the tracts of the Saints. These are desert waters. See—the water of the Desert is foul with the feet of famishing beasts, bitter with salts, reeking with microbes, stinking, but still life to a dying man. Though a distorted Christianity has enslaved free men, the Faith is still inspired, still divine. The Latter-Day Saints are only singular in that, rejecting the pure waters of Life, they have come into the Desert with sufficient thirst to swallow anything.

Beyond the Mormon Oasis, I came to the Painted Desert, where the sands have a strange power of re-

fracting sunlight so that the slopes glow topaz, the cliffs are ruby and hyacinth, and the air is like thin white flame. It was natural in such a place to find a prospector who told me that voices of the Dead were leading him in search for a cave of gold. That is the madness of the Desert, common enough, for at many a campfire one hears of lost mines fabulously rich, of men who went out sane to return as maniacs, of Indian secrets, of guiding charts, of bloodstained trails, of dying miners speechless, laden with gold. A big bright diamond high on the face of a precipice —I have seen it myself, and might be in an asylum but for the slabs of mica by the trail which told me the secret of that shining fraud. A prospector who found real diamonds which look like bits of gum arabic would throw them away. So I noted, on the long trail, hills of kaolin, walls of oil-shale, bitumen, and asphalt, traces of cinnabar, opal, ruby, corundum, tin. These might be ever so valuable, but the prospector passes them by in his search for the precious metals. Lost gold mines appeal to his mind, not a romance in fire clay.

Out of the heat mist of the Painted Desert my trail led up a fifty-mile hill into a great cool forest of

pine trees. There is no water. The polecats go mad, and of all the grizzly horrors in that land of death, the hydrophobia skunk is much the worst.

The skunk is a beast the size of a cat, with nice long hair of banded brown and white from nose to tail. He is a natural scent-bottle, and delights in his duty, which is to sprinkle perfume on his tail, then with a sharp jerk spray the fluid upon you. He gives freely, intending attar of roses, never grudging the pleasure which he was designed to bestow with his tail, and, being nose-blind, he has never found out that the attar of roses has gone bad. Should one drop alight upon you the very dogs will run away holding their noses; you must take a scalding bath, and your clothes must be buried.

They love man, seek after him, and even camp in his cellar; hence the courtly Mexican phrase: "My house is yours, Señor!" And when, poor things, they suffer from hydrophobia, they attack man, catch him asleep in camp, and bite his face. Then the man must go to the Pasteur Institute at Chicago, if there is time; or presently he will dread the sight of water, go mad, and be racked to death with convulsions. Many have died that death. Sleeping one

night in the Coconino Forest, I was awakened by a large animal on my pillow, a skunk mad with hydrophobia, trying to reach that eager nose which has so often led me into trouble. I shooed him away, and threw rocks, so that, maybe, he also was alarmed.

Under the shadow of the San Francisco peaks, I left my horses for a week's rest. The Desert is a region of fantastical contrasts, and here, of all things, coaches loaded with tourists went by in clouds of dust. No opium dream could have felt more outrageous to common sense than coming out of the Valley of the Shadow of Death to travel by coach among these pantomime figures, taking themselves so seriously in dusters, Kodaks, and eyeglasses, as we whirled through the forest glades, bound for the Grand Canyon of the Colorado. I would have pinched them to see if they were real, but for the fear of being rude. At the Canyon Hotel, rather tired after the seventy-mile drive, I was lashed to frenzied excitement by a discovery made the moment I entered the barroom. On pegs hung three pairs of green-duck bloomers and three pair blue, on hire at a shilling a time for the solace of ladies riding down into the canyon; and quite lately I found there had been no less than four

hundred Female Christian Endeavorers disputing viciously for possession. Quite apart from the ethical unseemliness of scratched faces, four hundred F. C. E. into six B. won't go.

I sat on the rim rock at dawn staring down into space, into blue mist which had no bottom, as though the floor of the world had dropped out. Only when the rose flush caught the farther wall could I see dim shapes of mountains far beneath. That northern wall was twelve miles away, as far as the Bronx from the Battery, and in the depths between all New York might be lost.

Those mounds down in the mist were mountains bigger than the Catskills. I was sitting in a pine forest like those of Norway, but the depths at my feet were in the climate of Central Africa.

After breakfast we rode down by a trail blasted in the face of the cliffs, which cost ten thousand dollars, and is so steep that, rather than haul up water from the river, the hotel sends wagons forty miles to the nearest springs. It was like riding down the outside of St. Paul's Cathedral, from cross to pavement, multiplied by fifteen.

Shrinking past the lean flanks of the upper cliffs,

the trail bridges a cleft to an outlying turret, winds round the sheer walls, loops down into the beginning of a chasm, and hangs over empty space. A mule fell off once out of sight and hearing, but, though never seen again, it appealed plaintively for weeks to the nostrils of passing tourists. Mules are specially broke for this trail, because they are handy with their feet and can live without grass or water. The lion and the tiger, all the beasts of the field, they get their meat from God; but the mule is an unnatural hybrid, so he does not get his meat from God. He gobbles up the leavings. The lady tourists are fearless, the men wabbly, and the distance to the river and back, though only fourteen miles, takes fourteen hours.

Sheer from the level forest falls the first wall of primrose flecked with orange, in long, curved bays of precipice, each headland guarded by columns of outstanding rock. Below is the labyrinth of mountains, vaguely suggesting sculptured Hindoo temples of red sandstone intricately carved, floating ethereal above the shadows of innumerable canyons; and far down beneath, under the shadows of the scarlet city, there is the last deep violet chasm where one may catch

a glimpse of a river sunk in the foundations of the world. That lost river winds for six hundred miles, sunken thousands of feet beneath the deserts. Such is the Grand Canyon of the Colorado, greatest of all the wonders of the Desert. Though I have wallowed in frantic description, please do not think that I am getting up on my hind-legs and pawing at the moon. It is all true.

. . . . . .

In the Great Desert I had an impression of riding through time, through ages, a wild jumble of shuffled centuries. This Desert is the scrap-heap of world-making, the dust-bin of History, full of sweepings thrown from the mills of God. The cowboys are cavaliers left over from Cromwell's wars, the Navajos are spare barbarians from ancient Asia, the tourists are shopworn goods from the twentieth century, the outlaws soiled knights from King Arthur's chivalry. So far my mind had tenure of what I saw, a basis for some sort of reasoning. The Yellowstone Park was a discarded garden from the New Jerusalem, the rock monuments in the Navajo Desert a sketchy design for some thirtieth-century metropolis, the Grand Canyon an experimental cataclysm from the

second day of the creation. Even so far my brain could accept the facts reverentially, with little prayers for help to understand. But when at last I fought through the red-hot valley of central Arizona, reason revolted in open mutiny. This place was a mistake, a fragment from some other planet, thrown on the wrong scrap-heap. Heaven knows I tried humbly to understand the world I have lived in, an insect intelligence groping among constellations of facts, an atom in creation playing as best I could, obedient to the rules of the game; but my little prayers fell flat in the Gila Desert. For hundreds of miles through unsupportable heat, over fields of broken lava, among weird hills, extended that garden of the flowering cacti. The Spanish bayonet, the prickly pear, the *ocotillo*, high as an apple tree, of emerald sticks with gem-like foliage guarded under thorns, the splendid *maguay* and *organos* farther south, the ethereal orchards of acacia, and above all, in thousands of columns branching like candelabra, the hosts of the giant *suhuaro*. Every plant, every reptile is the armed and deadly enemy of mankind —the region is not of this kindly earth, not of this time, but belongs to some far planet in outer space,

where plains of dull flame, rocks of old ice, are lighted by swinging pairs of scarlet stars.

Out of the silence of that world I came to a ditch of muddy water. Beyond, for ten delightful miles, the road was shaded with real leafy trees. Cattle switched lazy tails under the walnuts, labor-stained farmers were driving their gaudy women to squander dollars in town. So I reached Phœnix, a town of twelve thousand people, with electric street-cars and electric lights. The sidewalk was blithe with men, cowboys, prospectors, farm-hands, negroes, Apache Indians, low-caste Mexicans. It was Sunday, and in the crowded saloons gamblers in their shirt-sleeves sat impassive before their heaps of gold and silver, dealing faro, keno, poker, craps, roulette—the whole Sabbath service. Bartenders in white linen and diamonds dealt mixed drinks to the crowd. After sundown, ladies in evening dress and grease paint stood drinking cocktails in the intervals of their labor at the clanging, clattering piano. Last week two men had held up the Palace saloon, grabbed the gold from the tables, scattered loose coin across the floor, then vanished in a cloud of revolver smoke. Know all men by these presents that Arizona has turned respectable, and is a

law-abiding community. Already the people can abide the law, so long as it is not enforced.

. . . . . .

I was lost in the Desert as usual, and an old man found me sorely distressed. "A bad country? Aye, youngster, it's as bad as there is," he chuckled. "Show me a worse, and," he laughed triumphantly, "I'll pull out for it to-morrow!"

We were chasing his pack-horse over rock heaps, and my eyes dwelt with fervor upon the boyish grace of his riding. The sunlight caught the warm-hued leather of his "shaps," the long waves of his silvery hair. His sombrero darkened a wrinkled, bronzed old face of singular beauty, and his clear blue eyes looked into mine as he spoke. "Picked this up this morning,"—he passed me the fragment of a charred skull, —"old white man like me—I found the stake—the damned Apaches got him—yes, it's a bad country: t'other day I found a boot with a leg in it. Good enough country for poor old Texas Bob," and he laughed like a boy as he looked out into the distance.

We were nearing an awful golden ridge, which for two lost days I had tried to avoid afraid of any more sand-drifts.

"Why," said Texas Bob, "that's no sand, partner, that's grass!"

Grass! For months I had been carrying oats in my pack on which the horses were burning their poor stomachs. Grass! I had seen no grass like that for two thousand miles!

The great frontiersman gave me bread and water at his camp—a banquet, then a pipe, while we watched the little children "roping" reluctant dogs.

"Thar, stranger," he said at last, when I had watered my horses, "you go south a piece and you'll see whar my wagon passed two months ago. Follow up to the left—it's only thirty-five miles—and you'll make the city. Good-by."

So, where his wagon-wheels had bent the grass, making the blades to faintly catch the light, I scouted carefully, throwing back at times for a second try, on over golden hills and little valleys until the evening; then, after a luxurious night, rode hour upon hour. Another track joined in, a third, a well-defined trail from the east, an old road, and then all rolled into a great, broad highway where cowboys were driving cattle, wagons crawled in the dust-clouds, and

glittering coaches flashed by on their way to the city of Tucson.

Read now these Articles of War, the Laws of the southern Desert: For any man who fails of water on the trail, the punishment shall be—death; for touching insects and sly reptiles—death; for meeting Apaches on the warpath—death; for getting foul of escaped murderers from the Eastern States—death; fooling with Mexican outlaws or officials—death; for neglecting courtesy to man or woman, the duel and —death.

To live in the Arizona deserts one must pass the little examinations, or be plowed under, and that is why the men are all so quiet, so deadly smooth. They are the finest men I ever met, but they have paid for their education. I was the guest of one rancher, the best of citizens, who never kills except in self-defense, and yet is said to have twenty-seven notches on his gunstock.

I found that I was making myself unpleasantly conspicuous in dress by wearing no revolver. The weapon, to my mind, is a worse nuisance than even the umbrella of civilized man, which gets wet and unpleasant every time there is rain. A rotten bad

shot, always getting the worst of it in gun-fights, I should prefer some weapon—such as a cold boiled ham—which would be really useful at close quarters; but after reaching the Mexican Border, rather than be flouted as a lunatic, I became the slave of fashion and carried a rattletrap, second-hand Colt just for moral effect.

If ever I mentioned such peculiar details of life as the habit of homicide, the Arizona men assured me with pained eagerness that they were dead gentle. Indeed, in the whole summer there had only been twenty men shot, four wounded, and five cases of robbery-under-arms. It was an "exceptional season," I was told, and for a population one-fourth that of a single city ward, the most truculent critic must admit the charge sheet as being quite moderate. The Gloge coach, for example, was stopped by a little robber and a big robber, who, after collecting four hundred dollars, politely returned a dollar to each of the passengers. The little robber was so shy that he kept twiddling with his revolver, to the extreme discomfort of everybody concerned; and he frankly admitted afterwards having been in a horrible fright. "My mother was dying," ran the confession in prison;

"I had to get to her somehow, and it was the only possible way to raise the money." The little robber was Miss Pearl Hart, of the sign of the Red Lamp, and all Arizona was glad when that poor wild bird, having failed in an attempt to kill herself, made a clever escape from the cage. She chirped too much at large and was retaken, but Arizona juries are chivalrous.

In another case a rancher was too attentive to his housekeeper, and she, making complaint to his cowboys, they rescued her. They then gave the rancher a decent funeral.

Here is a tale of border chivalry, told me by a cowboy in hiding, sore and remorseful: Mr. Texas had served through the Mashona and Matabele campaigns when, sick of bloodshed, he came back for rest in his home on the Mexican border. "Very first evening," he said, "mother told me the niggers was stealing her hawgs. I went for them niggers after supper—got three, and one wounded. Call that peace? 'Course I had to ride for it—whole tribe of 'em after me. When I got to Pecos River, I calls on old Roy Bean for advice; you know his sign over the saloon, 'Whisky, Beer, and Justice west of the Pecos.'

'Well,' says the old judge, 'it's a sure bad case——only got three niggers, you say? Cost fifteen hundred dollars to get you clear! I guess it would be cheaper to give you a fresh horse.' He gave me a fresh horse, and I came to Naco.

"Ever been at Naco? Well, half the town's in Mexico and half in the United States—wide street keeps 'em apart—so thought I'd be plumb good there.

"Then comes Johnny Norris' trouble (Sept. 11, 1899); he kept a saloon on the Mexican side, and there was something wrong with his bills of sale over a horse-trade, not enough stamps on 'em for the taxes. The police was going to take Johnny up country and murder him on the way to jail, as usual; so some of us cowboys jumped in. Bob Clayton got killed, another fellow captured, but we sure lammed hell out of them Mexican guards. They got away, though, with poor Norris. So that night three of us rode out and laid for the escort on the trail. There was only three Mexicans in charge of Norris, and one of 'em got away, wounded, 'cause it was too dark to shoot for sure. Now, partner, you'd think that Norris would be just falling all over himself with thankfulness, eh? Well, he didn't; he was

sure wild, wanted to know what we meant by making trouble for him with the Mexicans! Come across to the United States? Not much! Why, he'd got away from penitentiary—twenty years—murder, and he'd no more use for the United States than a hen for a fry-pan. Of course we couldn't do nothin', just had to kick ourselves all the way home to Naco, U. S. A. Nice peaceful time I was having!

"Next morning the United States Marshal comes up, and says he was going to arrest me. 'Is that so?' says I. 'Well,' says he, looking down my gun-bar'l, 'of course if you put it that way—you'd better ride!' So I just rolled my tail, and here I am hid up, Mexico howling for me one side of the line, and Uncle Sam the other. All I want," he added piteously, "is peace and quietness, if only they'd leave me alone."

On the 23d of October the Bisbee people came down to Naco for a baseball match, and the Mexican guards, alarmed at being invaded, promptly opened fire on an excursion train full of women and children. They erroneously wounded one bystander. Also an American, a very full citizen, did indeed invade Mexico, and the Mexicans got him down, beating him over the

head and trying hard to subdue him. Three cowboys, jumping to the rescue, were captured.

So I found the border lined on both sides with National troops, and a hundred and fifty cowboys preparing to march on the City of Mexico.

The Mexicans had to release their captives—too hot to hold; and judging by the dismal ululations of the wounded guards, whom I saw at La Morita, a very little cowboy goes a long way.

Following the border-line eastward, I chartered a Mexican to pilot me across the Rocky Mountains, which he did so slowly that on the third day I emptied my canteens—surely a little thirst would quicken the gentleman's gait. As usual I added up the facts all wrong, for, with many fine Spanish phrases of courtesy, he left me to the sole enjoyment of the dry canteens. Obedient to his parting advice, I might have found a spring, or might not, eighty miles south-southeast, but the person had a bad eye, and rather than trust I scouted for signs of water over country richly grassed, swarming with deer, and embossed with the very choicest of fresh grizzly tracks. The Desert is a book, the tracks are printed type, a dozen little signs are readable facts, and from all these I gathered

a solution. Such trails as there were on the land had not been used for at least twelve months, there was no water within fifteen miles, therefore the guide, in revenge for the slight of the canteens, had intended my death. Happily, while he led me, I had noted a live trail leading eastward; so on the second day I lit out for that clew to water, riding northeast across country, found it, followed it, and fell in with an American cowboy.

"What's the matter with you?" he asked, when we had talked of the weather. "Can't hear your voice—what's wrong?"

"Canteen's empty," said I. "I'm rather thirsty."

"Why, mine's full!" he cried.

It did not remain full.

"Last night," I asked, "did you see a big fire in the south? I signaled for help."

"Or to scare away the Apaches?" He spoke with scorching contempt, and I never again lighted a fire in that land of the raiding savages. He brought me to a little ranch where two years before the Apaches had scalped a man on the doorstep, and there we found a dozen cowboys camped for a bear hunt. I was very weak, they tender as brothers. and when I

was fit for the trail they passed me on from camp to camp to the edge of the Mexican cattle range, soothing my bruised vanity with surprise that I had won through alive.

I never camped again, but disposing of my pack-horse, relied henceforward upon big fortified houses rarely more than a day's ride apart. Twenty years ago this country, over an area as large as France, was swept bare by the Apaches. They stole the cattle, outraged the women, dashed the babies against walls, tortured the men to death. Now these nice Indians are pets of the United States Government, and only get an occasional traveler. The bloodstained land is stocked with fresh cattle and a new people, ruled by great Frontier lords with more than feudal power. The ranch of Don Luis Terrazas, where I crossed it, was just two hundred miles wide. I found his Mexican cowboys a never-ending delight, for every branding is as good as a first-rate bull-fight. The rush of a wild bull-calf from the pen, the swift roping and tying down, his smoke and execrations under the iron, then the release of the scorched and outraged animal, who clears out thirty cowboys in ten seconds, charging the last man as he leaps, and bringing down the

wall—the bull feasts of Spain were tame compared with it. In tight leg-armor, and leather Eton jacket, a sugar-loaf sombrero heavy with silver lace, spurs of a four-inch rowel, a *serape* cloak which would knock a rainbow cold, the Mexican cowboy is more than picturesque. Amid the smoke and thunder of the corral work they are all polite as dukes over their cigarettes, weighing the low-rolling periods of their majestic Spanish—grave, quiet, with the swagger of troopers, flash of weapons, gleam of white teeth, and fiery, brave black eyes. They are rich on twenty cents a day, and the girls adore them.

One day I met the eldest son of the great Terrazas, traveling the Desert in state. First came an advanced guard, then the multitude of his riders, ten abreast, the wranglers with the horse herd, a bullock cart with cargo, a group of officers, then, far in their rear, a coach covered with servants, drawn by six white mules, the leaders four abreast, at full gallop. All this ninth-century feudal pageant I knocked endways with the mere clicking of my Kodak camera from the saddle, then made a final snap at my lord himself, and a sweeping salute for farewell.

At the end of the Terrazas ranch was the city of

Chihuahua (pronounced Chewáwa), and as I rode a scrubby little pony up the main street, I saw dancing ahead a horse such as one might dream of in paradise. Hungry for him I drew abreast, spoke to the rider and gloated. He was a milk-white Arab gelding, thoroughbred bar the useful size of the feet, mane and tail like drifting snow, eye decidedly bad, build perfection. He introduced himself just then by rearing up and coming down on the top of me all a-straddle, and nearly broke my off knee as I swerved. Five days later he was mine—I said my prayers and gave my spurs away before I mounted; and for once I judged right of a horse. Greasy heels and a thousand-mile stretch failed to lower the infernal pride of his neck, or break the superb grace of his action. All that for fifty dollars in gold!

So I rode down the narrowing tail of the continent, deaf and dumb with regard to Spanish, always more or less lost, on that utterly untamable beauty who thought he owned me. The people of the country believe that China is the greatest of nations, Spain the leading republic, England a part of London, and the United States easy to conquer bar one obstruction —Texas! They know the Texans of old—would

rather fight mad dragons, and they mistook me for a Texas cowboy such as they would not confide to Satan for fear of corrupting his morals; yet never in hut or palace was I denied a courtly welcome. Each night some housewife accepted the care of my revolver, and her husband charge of my gear, the honor of the house being bound. The black man would feed my horse while I stood by with a club lest the forage be grabbed by his starving goats and swine, his hungry horse or mule, his ravenous poultry. The wife made me maize pancakes like unto damp brown paper, beans, and chile—which is stewed cayenne pepper eaten with a ladle. At night the embroidered sheets from the best bed would be laid down on a cowhide for me, and I, the uninvited Texas cowboy, was trusted to sleep in the one room with the fowls and the family. Would an English householder trust a tramp like that? And only in the poorest mud huts could I venture to force a silver dollar on the wife, when at parting she muttered "Mayest thou ride with God!"

A clay hut, a fortified homestead, a town in some vale of farms, such were the halting places, a day's ride apart where there was water, for the last seven hundred miles of the Great Desert. It seemed as

though there were never to be an end. Then I came to Zacatecas, a city of silver mines perched on the very watershed of the continent, on the crest of the Mother Range. I left the city, the Desert still reaching away ahead.

A farmer joined me, wearing the usual suit of leather laced with silver and gold, cloak, sword, revolver—so all Mexicans ride; and for twenty miles we smoked slow cigarettes, swapped stately Spanish compliments. Then we came to a cactus hedge just inside the tropics, a hedge of prickly pear. Behind me lay three thousand miles of conquered Desert, in front, for ever and ever, fields of maize.

XVIII

A RECORD IN HORSEMANSHIP

THE big fight was over, the Desert conquered, and there remained only a road as long, say, as that from New York to Poughkeepsie, through civilized country down to the City of Mexico. So I thought, while the influenza caught in Zacatecas gripped every bone, set the blood racing with fever, and reduced me to the flat of my back save only during weary hours in the saddle as I fought on from town to town.

Here were all the blessings of civilization, the cheating, theft, beggary, but, added to these, certain peculiar graces of Mexico—heartless cruelty towards animals, and the unspeakable corruption of the governing officials. The blessed natives might stew in their own juice for all I cared, but when I found them subtly stealing forage from my horse there was always more or less violence. At Silao it pleased me to charge the manager of the Grand Hotel with that

abhorred crime, and I was certainly very rude. It is a curious trait of the Mexican that after a spasm of rage he develops blotches on the skin, local paralysis, or epileptic fits entailing a doctor's bill, sometimes the further account of an undertaker. Therefore I soothed the manager of the Grand Hotel with that cold, bland, deadly insult which so endears the Englishman to all foreigners. He went through shades of lemon to the pallor of an unripe orange, his legs wabbled, and I hoped for fits; but unhappily he was a Spaniard by birth, and therefore not liable. The only result, indeed, was that the hotel was surrounded by troops, and in solemn procession my horse and I were both marched off to prison. There, after the usual indignities, I was placed in a fine large cell barred off from the jail-birds of the common yard. Mine was only a police-court affair—"insulting a citizen"; and the procedure would begin with seventy-two hours' detention, during which no word could reach a friend or advocate outside the walls. A magistrate would then presume guilt, and punish accordingly. My adversary appeared to own the Chief of the Police, and in any case a white man, once captured, is blackmailed to his last dollar before he escapes

the net. One Englishman, in default of the customary bribes, had at that time been lying five years in a Mexican jail, untried, and beyond all aid from the British Foreign Office. Another innocent man I afterwards found lying at Vera Cruz, Mr. Angus M'Kay, a British subject of the cleanest reputation, under no charge whatever, ten months detained, unable to pay blackmail. His comrade was just dead that morning of yellow fever, he himself was visibly sickening for the black vomit, and we who saved him were only just in time. There are dozens of such cases, and no foreigner in Mexico is safe from the fiendish atrocities of Mexican law.

Where there is common danger, Americans and British are one body for the common defense, and a number of Americans who had witnessed my arrest strained every nerve for my rescue. At dusk, Dr. George Byron Hyde came to me with word from the Governor of the town that I might be released on payment of twelve dollars and a half. This I flatly declined, demanding that the Governor of the city call and make his personal apology to me on pain of a telegram to the British Minister. When I had been five hours in prison, the Governor called upon me, and

we walked out arm-in-arm. Then Dr. Hyde took my horse and me to his own home.

The jail cured the influenza, but gave me dysentery, and the rest of my ride to the City of Mexico I only remember as a long nightmare of pain. There is no need to dwell on that, for all the land was beautiful, all the people were rich in courtesy, in charm, in music, poetry, flowers, in splendor of dress, and in their lovely cities. If the people lived for something better than their emotions, cared for graver ideals than mere display, there might be a real Republic, not a ghastly sham. Workers, thinkers, fighters, build up a sovereign State, not fops, not cowards. The workers, thinkers, and fighters seemed mainly foreigners.

It was a relief to get away from such a civilization up into the mountains which guard the valley of Mexico. The January days were sweet with a breath of spring, and on one lonely hillside I found a hawthorn bush flecked with the scented blossom of the may. There were groves of oak and glades of grass, and in the wild bed of a dry torrent swept the long trail down. One night more I slept at a wayside house, one last day rode over forty miles of rocky

hills, then in the cool of evening gained a level plain with avenues of trees, white glittering towns, canals, roads, railways, all converging southward. The darkness fell as I entered a long chain of suburbs bright with the sparkle of electric lamps; and five miles on, the denser traffic, the wider streets, the palaces, churches, gardens, the lights and glitter of a brilliant capital. I had built up a day-dream in the Desert that, entering the City of Mexico, I would ride to the doors of some big hotel, leave my horse with the porter, ask the office clerk for his book, and register my name, from Fort Macleod, Canada. But when I came to the reality, the hotel man, looking me over, decided that all his rooms were full, that he could not have his tourists scared by a travel-worn cowboy, with a probable propensity for casual shots at the waiters. His was a respectable house, so I took my white horse elsewhere, and that was the end.

The ride from Canada measured 3600 statute miles, as far, say, as from London to Timbuctoo, or perhaps Chicago. Three good horses covered nearly the whole distance, but, including pack animals, I used in all nine, at a total cost of $220.50. The time from June 28, 1899, to January 21, 1900, was 200 days at 18

miles a day, but for the 147 actual days of travel the average was a little better.

. . . . .

A bell tingled somewhere in the engine-room, and we slowed down, rocking ever so softly. Glazed water reaching through white mist, chill dew on deck and spars, passengers venturing muffled remarks through borrowed opera-glasses—but still we could only feel the land, not see. Up on the bridge the Liverpool pilot held high discourse with the captain, we, underneath, straining intent ears for any crumbs which fell from that banquet of news. The passenger who had the glasses leaned forward, peering; we, hustling him, craned all our necks to see.

"There," he whispered, awestruck, "at last after seventeen years—England!" and, indeed, there was a blur upon the mist,—a ship? a square-topped house? a hoarding? No. It seemed to be a placard painted with some great sign of welcome—loving words to greet us on the sea—yes, "Bald's Hair Restorer"!

THE END

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